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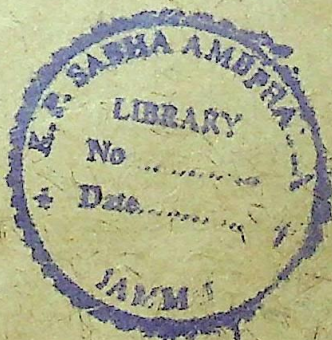
1968

R. Haul

January 1968
April 1968

Sacred Poetry
Sacred Poetry

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*Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those
who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!*

The Mountain Path

Vol. V

JANUARY 1968

No. 1

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

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"(Unmoving) Hill, melting into a Sea of Grace, have mercy (on me) I pray, Oh, Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 17.

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ॐ THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1.

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verse in Telugu and Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Bhagavan's own handwriting.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State'. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Words

1. తన్ను మఱచి తనువునా నైతఁబచి
యెన్నియో జన్మయు లెత్తికుది — తన్ను
తెలిసితా నౌటపలు దేశసం చార
కలన్మే ల్కనుట కను.

1. తన్నే మఱచి తనువేతా అవెఁనఁని
యెఁనఁనిలో బిఱవి యెఱిఱిగితి — తన్నే
యెఱిఱిగితి తా అత లులకఁకుఁ శారక
కఁనఁని విఱిఱిగితి కఁనఁ.

1. He who is forgetful of the Self, mistaking the physical body for it, and goes through innumerable births, is like one who wanders all over the world in a dream. Thus realizing the Self would only be like waking up from the dream-wanderings.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

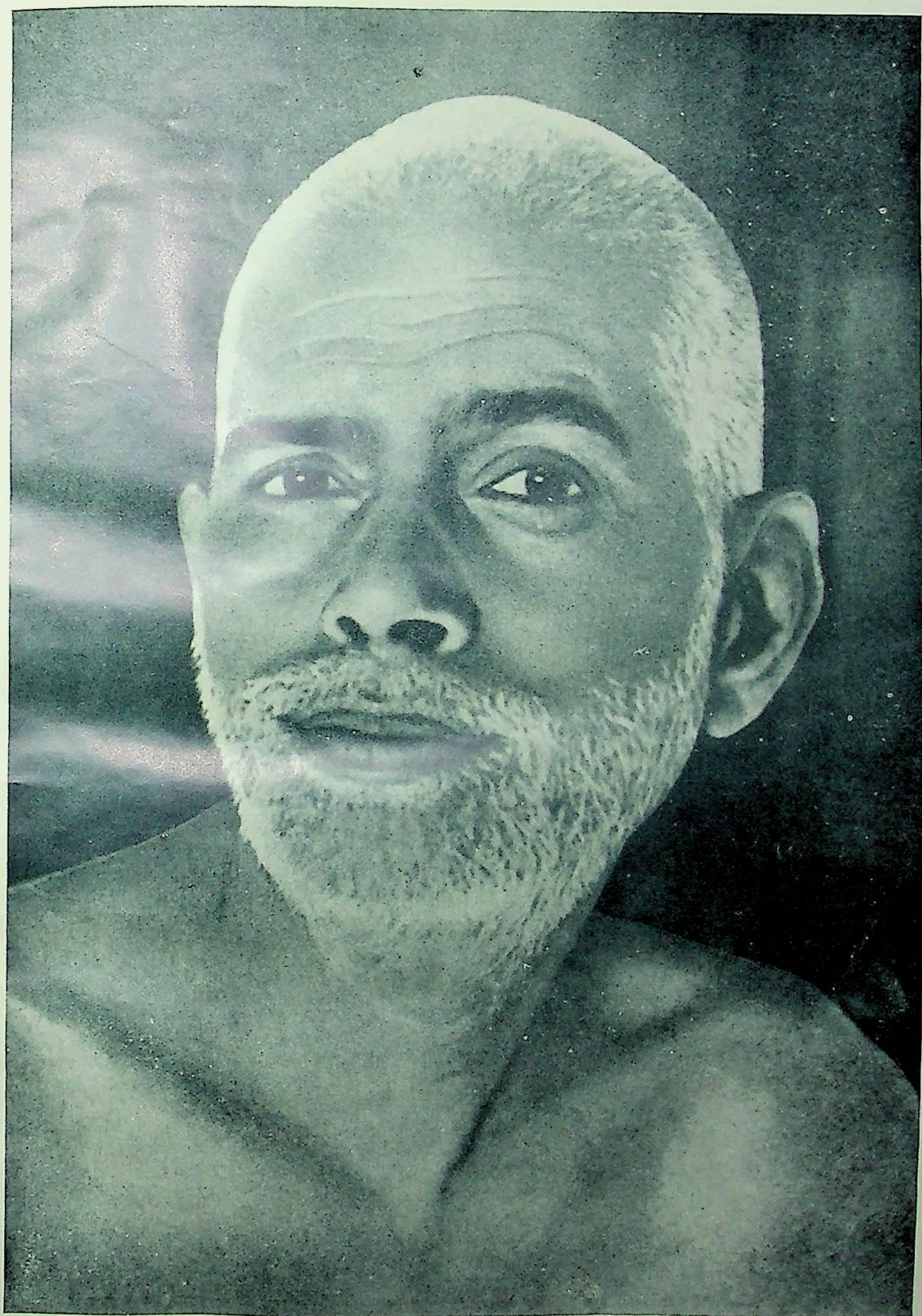
Distance in Miles

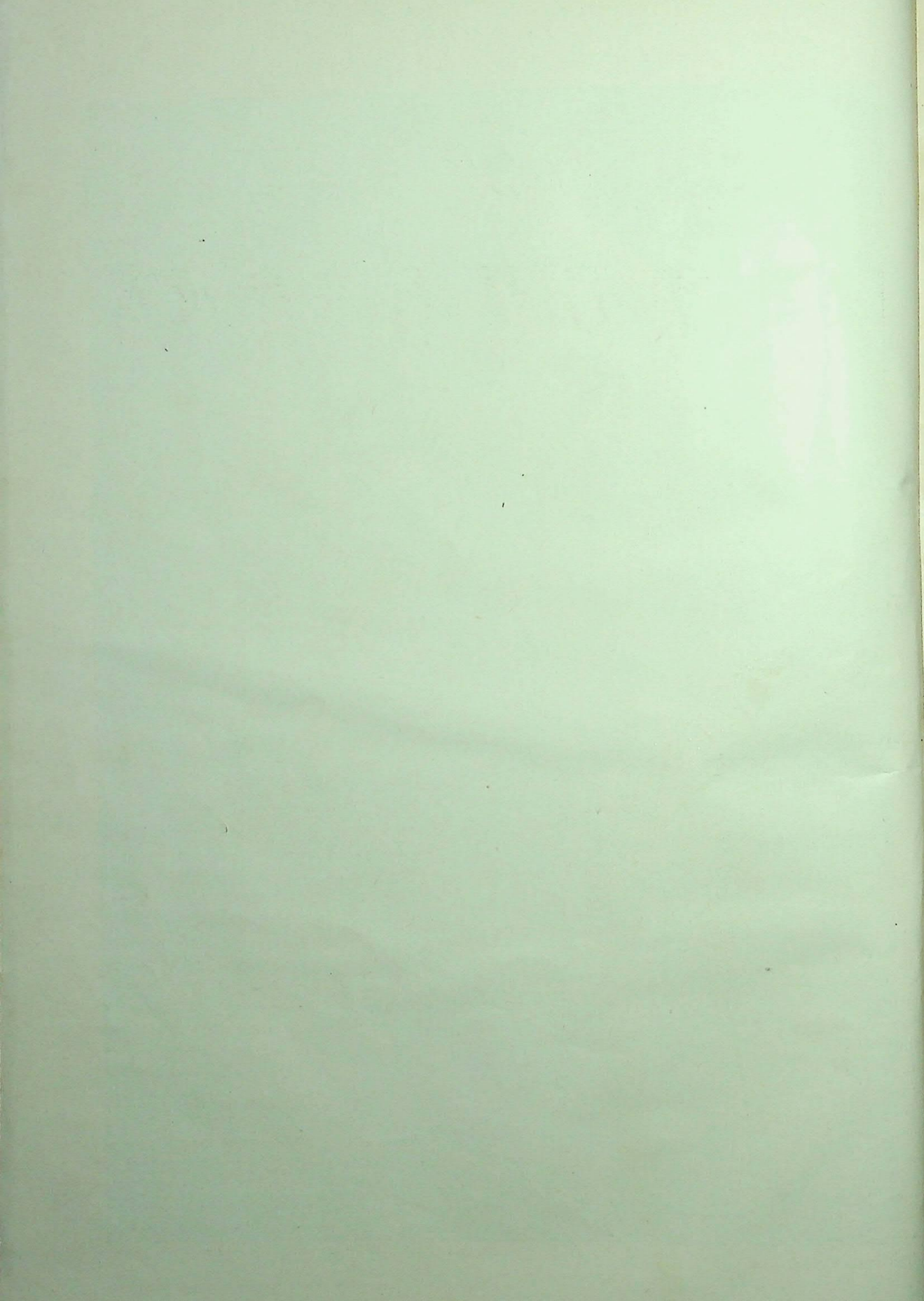
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1. தான் மறந்துகொண்டிருப்பவன் தன் உடம்பைத் தன் தன்மையாகக் கருதி, எல்லா உலகங்களிலும் பிறந்து இறந்து போகிறான். இவ்வாறு தன் உடம்பைத் தன் தன்மையாகக் கருதி, எல்லா உலகங்களிலும் பிறந்து இறந்து போகிறான். இவ்வாறு தன் உடம்பைத் தன் தன்மையாகக் கருதி, எல்லா உலகங்களிலும் பிறந்து இறந்து போகிறான்.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARISHI









THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. V

JANUARY, 1968

No. 1

SACRED POETRY

Editorial

SACRED Poetry ? Isn't all poetry sacred ?

One is apt to say so, but that may not be much more than a cliché. A good deal of shoddy verse that is written nowadays is anything but sacred ; of course, it may also be anything but poetry.

Poetry came before prose in human literature. In many languages the oldest forms of literature were either religious lyrics such as the Vedic hymns or symbolical myths such as the Book of Genesis. (And it is worth noting that the classical Greeks regarded the Homeric poems as a religious document. They had not the profound teaching or lofty purpose of the Hindu epics, but they established norms, and there is no doubt that symbolism of the quest runs through the Odyssey.)

Normally the earliest poetry comes before the invention of writing. Students of pre-history are apt to presume that this was because early man lacked the ability to construct an alphabet, but this is rather

glib. It requires greatest ability to construct a poem than an alphabet. Before accepting such a hypothesis one should consider the mentality of early man and see whether he might not have had some reason for not wanting to set down his poems in writing. There is ample evidence that he had. It is authoritatively laid down that the Vedas should be chanted with correct intonation and only by those who have learned them from a duly authorised instructor. Similarly, Buddhist scriptures were for centuries transmitted only orally despite the existence of a script. And in Islam from the lifetime of the Prophet onwards there have always been Muslims who could recite the entire Quran by heart. The Druids never did write down their scriptures even though contact with the Romans must have familiarised them with the art of writing. Scriptures had to be chanted and to learn them from a book (which in any case could not impart the correct intonation) would be profanation. In fact, for ancient man to

introduce a script would open the door to a twofold profanation: to the superficial and unlicensed reading of the sacred texts and to the use of preserved (i.e. written) language for worldly purposes such as recording property and settling disputes; it would mark the birth of prose. Such a stage had to come and it was a great step forward in material civilization, but spiritually it was a decline.

The ancient languages in which scriptures and sacred poems were composed — Sanskrit, Hebrew, Welsh, etc. — were actually regarded as sacred languages. This implies that not merely the sense but the sound was sacred. The texts not only expounded doctrine but did so with the help of sound vibrations having their own effect on those who recite or even hear them. That is why certain words and phrases could be prescribed as mantras. They have a subtle power going far beyond their literal meaning. Since the principle underlying this explains the effect of both music and poetry on people, it should not be hard to understand. And it must be remembered that traditionally poetry and music were not divorced. It was not a mere cliché when a poet spoke of 'singing'. In traditional communities even to-day sacred poetry is not spoken but chanted. Certainly a pious phrase which some one repeats only for the meaning of it is not a mantra. This shows the importance of regular liturgical prayers being said or chanted in a sacred language — Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Pali, as the case may be. In fact, it is significant that Buddhism and Christianity, both of which began without a sacred language, both adopted one: Pali in Southern Buddhism and Sanskrit in Northern; Latin in Western Christianity and Greek in Eastern. Parts of the Vedas were chanted before the Maharshi morning and evening in his lifetime and still are at his Ashram, and it was and is usual to sit in meditation during the chanting. When some over-zealous person asked him whether one should learn the meaning of them so as to follow the chanting he said no. Their purpose is only to quieten the mind and dispose one to meditation. To think about their meaning would

defeat the aim of remaining conscious in meditation without thinking.

The widespread modern objection to ritualistic prayers in a sacred language, and indeed to ritual in general, may be partly due to a true feeling that the time has now come when inner and more direct means are appropriate; on the other hand, it may be due to the anti-spiritual tendency going right back to the Reformation to reduce everything to the mental level, seeing no more in prayer than a rational statement or request. There are vibrations that affect the being in a far more integral way. Before depriving oneself of them it is well to make sure that one is going beyond them and not sinking below them.

How far, then, should one's mind be fixed on a mantra that one uses? How far is it valid if used without concentration? Some gurus have declared that it confers no benefit unless one steadily keeps one's mind on it while using it; others (for instance Swami Omkarnath, about whom there is an article in our issue of July 1965) that it has an effect even if uttered without concentration. They are guarding against opposite dangers. The former guards against inattentiveness and mental wandering, the latter against the idea of a mantra as a mere thought-form. It is best to resist both dangers by keeping the mind concentrated but thought-free while saying a mantra.

Sacred poetry does not so much express doctrine as indicate or imply it. Sometimes it does this through myths and symbols: for instance when it represents Divine Activity as the Son or Wife of Divine Being; sometimes through cryptic utterances which merely point the way. For instance, it would be hard to find a more far-reaching statement than the Vedic "*Neti, Neti*", "not this, not that"; but it needs to be understood.

There is no actual difference in nature between sacred and worldly poetry. What happens in both cases is that the poet's mind becomes pregnant with some intuitional

feeling or understanding and this churns him up in such a way that his language becomes rhythmical and he utters forth an indication, though never an exact account, of what had moved him. The difference is that with worldly poetry it is some merely human emotion, frustration or desire which has moved him to write. It is impossible to draw an absolute dividing line and examples would serve little purpose, because there are innumerable gradations from physical impulse to Divine certitude; nevertheless the broad demarcation is clear. It is not a question of difference of subject, as for instance when one poet writes about the beauty of nature, another about the squalor of the city and a third about the woman he loves; it is something more fundamental: a difference in level of perception. Spiritual understanding is not a subject among others but a higher and more universal mode of experience. Writing sacred poetry does not mean writing doctrine or philosophy in verse but recording the supernal wonder.

Not only in ancient times when the scriptures were composed but down to the spread of modernism in quite recent times poetry normally was spiritual in most of the world's great civilizations. The great Hindu epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, are quite explicitly works setting forth the dharma or spiritual pattern of life and interspersed with expositions of doctrine. The Bhagavad Gita is an episode in the latter of them. Although there was secular Sanskrit literature, most of the great works were spiritual. Not only in Sanskrit but in the vernacular languages of India also, the saints were expected to be poets and the poets saints. The great Shankara was a poet incidentally, so to speak. Tamil poetry is the work of saints. The great Mediaeval Mahratta saints, Jnanadev, Tukaram and others, were great poets also. The greatest Hindi poetical work is the Ramayana of Tulsidas (for whom see an article in our issue of January 1965). Both the Bhaktas and Tantrics of Bengal were lyric

poets. It is only in modern times that the tradition has been abandoned.

It was the same thing in the various schools of Buddhism. The early Arahats of Theravada Ceylon have left poems recording the lofty grandeur of their state. The Tibetan Tantric Milarepa is outstanding alike as a saint and a poet. In Islam the great poets were Sufi saints, outstanding among them Jalaluddin Rumi in Persian and Ibn Arabi in Arabic. Even Omar Khayyam, who has become so famous in English owing to a felicitous paraphrase, and has been considered a hedonist, is in reality a mystic using Sufi symbolism: the tavern is the mystic fraternity, the wine divine ecstasy, the tavern-keeper the guru, and so forth. The point is that it was considered normal for poets to be saints and saints poets. It is the West that has had the sad distinction of breaking this divine union. From the beginning Christian saints have expounded their doctrine and recorded their experiences in prose. And the poets, with the mundane Latin example to draw upon, have had only this world to write about. Dante in Italy and Shakespeare in England were steeped in Hermetic symbolism and wrote with understanding, but how few others! Other poets have had an occasional intuition but the great body of Western poetry has remained, so to speak, on the ground floor level of merely human experience. Surely this is a tradition worth breaking!

A concluding remark may be in order about an unfortunate after-effect of the great Hindu tradition of poet-saints. That is that it seems to have become normal for Hindu swamis to write what they consider to be English poetry. It is distressing to have to read it, because that is just what it is not. To question a writer's eminence as a swami might be presumptuous, but not as an English poet. Not one of them has been accepted by English literary critics as an English poet or deserves to be. This tradition also should be broken.

THE PRINCIPLE OF JAPA

By

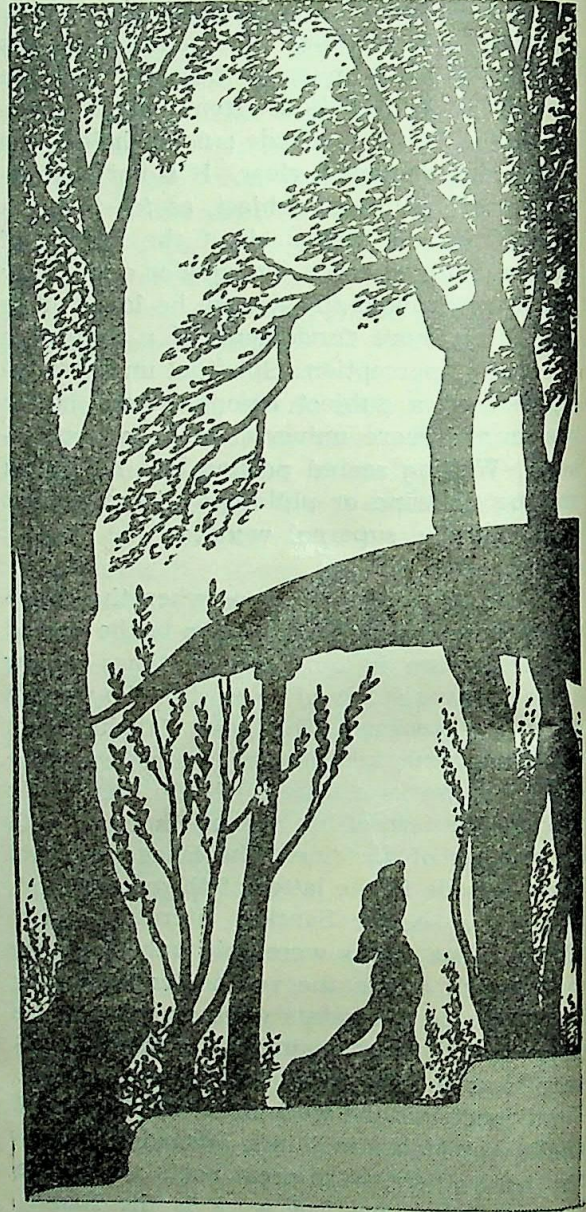
Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

"THE mantra becomes one's staff of life", declares Mahatma Gandhi, "and carries one through every ordeal. It is repeated not for the sake of repetition but for the sake of purification, as an aid to effort, for direct guidance from above. It is no empty repetition. For each repetition has a new meaning, carrying you nearer and nearer to God".

What exactly is a mantra? In order to answer this question it is necessary to refer briefly to the theory of vibrations on which, say the illustrious sages, it is based. According to this theory, from the Great Silence there issued one Creative Word. "In the beginning was Brahman, with whom was the Word; and the Word was truly the supreme Brahman." This significant verse from the Rig-Veda has an almost exact parallel in the Gospel according to St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

According to this theory, *shabda* or sound is the subtle stuff out of which the phenomenal world has emanated, and every object may, therefore, be looked upon as sound of a particular concentration. In other words, this world of *nama* (name) and *rupa* (form) is *shabda* (sound) manifesting itself at varying levels of vibration.

Language is only a very small part of *shabda* and consists of words in which the relationship between *nama* (name) and *rupa* (form) may be called arbitrary or accidental. For example, there is no intrinsic or inherent connection between the sound "table" and the object table. As contrasted with the words of language, Om or Aum is a "natural name" in which there is an intrinsic and inherent connection between the *nama* (name) and *rupa* (form), between the sound and the substance, between the Word and the Rea-



lity it represents. To quote Swami Vivekananda: "The first letter A, is the root sound, the key pronounced without touching any part of the tongue or palate; M represents the last sound in the series, being produced by the closed lips, and U rolls

from the very root to the end of the sounding board of the mouth. Thus, Om (or Aum) represents the whole phenomenon of sound-producing."

Listen to the Katha Upanishad: "Of that goal which all the Vedas declare, which is implicit in all tapas (austerities), and in pursuit of which men lead lives of continence and service, of that will I briefly speak.

"It is Om.

"This syllable is Brahman. This syllable is indeed supreme. He who knows it obtains his desire.

"It is the strongest support. It is the highest symbol. He who knows it is revered as a knower of Brahman."

Rama¹ is another perfect "natural name" that has come down to us through the ages. On the verbal level the word Rama means he who can fill us with abiding joy; and on the *shabda* or spiritual level too it means the same. When we try to describe God as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Joy) Rama may be called a perfect "natural name" for the third aspect of Absolute Joy. In other words, Rama is a spiritual formula for abiding joy bequeathed to humanity by the illumined sages of ancient India.

The constant repetition of the Holy Name, whether Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Jesus Christ, Allah or the impersonal Om, has the power of calming the mind, nay, even of stilling it.

The repetition of the Holy Name or mantra is called *japa* in Sanskrit, and can bring us lasting benefits on the physical, mental and spiritual levels. "It is a sun that has brightened my darkest hours," Mahatma Gandhi tells the world. "Ramnam is no copy-book maxim. It is something that has to be realized through experience. One who has had personal experience alone can prescribe it, not any other. The recitation of Ramnam for spiritual ailments is as old as the hills. But the greater includes the less. And my claim is that the recitation of Ramnam is a sovereign remedy for our physical ailments also!"

Here is the power of the Word (*japa*) as proclaimed by a memorable mystical document of mediaeval England, *The Cloud of Unknowing*: "The word shall be thy shield and thy spear, whether thou ridest on peace or war. With this word thou shalt beat on this cloud and this darkness above thee. With this word thou shalt smite down all manner of thought under the cloud of forgetting. Insomuch that, if any thought press upon thee to ask what thou wouldst have, answer with no more than with this one word. And if he offer of his great learning to expound to thee that word, say to him that thou wilt it all whole, and not broken nor undone. And if thou wilt hold fast to this purpose, be sure that that thought will no while bide."

Let us now turn to an illuminating exposition in the annals of Islam on the power of the Word to evoke Reality. "The shaykh took my hand and led me into the convent. I sat down in the portico, and the shaykh picked up a book and began to read. As is the way of scholars, I could not help wondering what the book was.

"The shaykh perceived my thoughts. 'Abu Sa'id', he said, 'all the hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets were sent to preach one word. They bade the people say *Allah* and devote themselves to Him. Those who heard this word by the ear alone let it go out by the other ear; but those who heard it with their souls imprinted it on their souls and repeated it until it penetrated their hearts and souls, and their whole beings became this word. They were made independent of the pronunciation of the word; they were released from the sound of the letters. Having understood the spiritual meaning of this word, they became so absorbed in it that they were no more conscious of their own non-existence.'"

In the Hindu tradition, a spiritual aspirant receives a mantra from his guru for constant repetition or *japa*. The mantra consists of one or more words or Holy Names skillfully selected by the teacher to answer the needs

¹ In speech and *japa* the final 'a' in the name 'Rama' is usually omitted — (Editor).

of the aspirant, and carries with it the imprint of the teacher's personal experience or realization of the mantra.

In the Catholic tradition "Hail Mary" is a very powerful Mantra that is pregnant with what Sri Ramakrishna would call the infinite Love of the Divine Mother for her wayward children. As long as the child is playing with its toys in the living room, the mother keeps busy in the kitchen cooking curry and rice for the meal. But the moment the child gets tired of the toys, throws them away and gives one full-hearted, full-throated yell, the mother leaves her curry and rice on the stove, rushes into the living room, picks up the child tenderly and comforts it. Similarly, Sri Ramakrishna would add, when you and I stop playing with our adult toys of pleasure and profit, power and prestige, and call from our heart of hearts for the Divine Mother, She will reveal herself to us immediately in the depths of our own consciousness.

"Om Mani Padme Hum" is the widely known Tibetan Buddhist mantra which, assiduously repeated, can enable us to find the Jewel that lies hidden in the lotus of our heart.

The mantra I have received from my grandmother, with the imprint of her own intense spiritual awareness, is one of the most powerful and one of the most popular in all India. It consists of three Holy Names: Hari (Hare is the vocative form pronounced Haray), Rama and Krishna. Hari comes from the Sanskrit verb *har* meaning to steal. The Lord stole my heart and kept it with Him when He sent me into the world. All that I am doing all the time on earth is searching for my heart in money and material possessions, in pleasure and power. It is a great day for me when I discover through a process of trial and error that the Divine Thief is hiding in my own heart all the time.

Rama, we have already seen, is the Lord who can fill us with abiding joy. Krishna, from the Sanskrit root *karsh* to draw, is the Lord of Love enshrined in our heart, who

is drawing us to himself all the time. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna tells Arjuna, "I am the gambling of the fraudulent," meaning thereby that even the gambler, who is going to Las Vegas or Monte Carlo to break the bank, is really hoping to break into the Kingdom of Heaven within to find abiding joy and complete fulfilment. In other words, we are all looking for the Divine Thief who has stolen our heart because we are all searching for abiding joy and complete fulfilment.

When I was a child, sleeping on the verandah of our ancestral home in Kerala in South India, I used to wake up every morning to the chanting of *Hare Rama* by my grandmother as she swept the courtyard with her coconut-fibre broom. Through her benediction, it must have sunk deep into my heart then from where it rose to my rescue many years later under the storm and stress of life.

How can one make the mantra an integral part of one's consciousness? On the strength of my own very small spiritual experience I would put forward the following suggestions:

1. It is very helpful for everyone to receive a mantra which carries the imprint of the giver's personal experience of its power.

2. The mantra may be repeated in the mind as long and as often as we can — while walking, while riding in a car or on a plane, while doing mechanical chores, etc. We can thus learn to make good use of these odds and ends of time which are often wasted in idle talk or escapist reading to practise japa.

3. When we are getting angry, afraid or otherwise agitated, let us go for a brisk walk, repeating the mantra in the mind. Gradually the rhythm of our step, the rhythm of our breath and the rhythm of the mantra will blend into a healing harmony to transform the negative emotion of anger into compassion, fear into fearlessness, frustration into fulfilment. The mantra acts as a tremendous transformer.

4. At bedtime, after lying down, let us close our eyes and keep repeating the

mantra until we fall asleep. This may be difficult at first, but we are likely to be pleasantly surprised at the ease with which even the reader-in-bed learns to do it.

As in secular disciplines, practice makes perfect in japa too. But, unlike secular disciplines, as the mantra sinks into the deeper levels of consciousness, a wave of bliss begins to rise up from the Sea of Bliss that is the Atma. After years of patient practice we come to hear the mantra in our dreams, in our sleep, in the song of the nightingale or the murmur of the brook that babbles by. No longer do we have to perform japa consciously because the mantra has become an integral part of our consciousness. It is now *ajapajapa* (japa without japa) in which the mantra goes on repeating itself. In the mystical language of ancient India, the mantra has opened its doors and taken in the devotee. As Sri Ramakrishna puts it,

with prosaic poetry, such a devotee is like an employee who receives his pension from the employer after years of faithful service. He can live on his pension without having to work any more for his livelihood.

One in whom the mantra has become an integral part of consciousness may be thus described in the powerful words of Meister Eckhart: "Whoever has God in mind, simply and solely God, in all things, such a man carries God with him into all his works and into all places, and God alone does all his works. He seeks nothing but God, nothing seems good to him but God. He becomes one with God in every thought. Just as no multiplicity can dissipate God, so nothing can dissipate this man or make him multiple."

May the mantra enable us to attain the higher state of consciousness in which nothing can dissipate or make us multiple!

Highlights of July

The Place of the Maharshi in History *by Arthur Osborne*

Zen and Vichara *by Gerald Yorke*

Thayumanavar, a Tamil Poet-Saint, *by T. Krishnaji*

Christ and Christianity as seen by a Hindu Swami
by Swami Nirmalananda

Problems of Right and Wrong *by 'Sein'*

SRUTI AND SMRITI

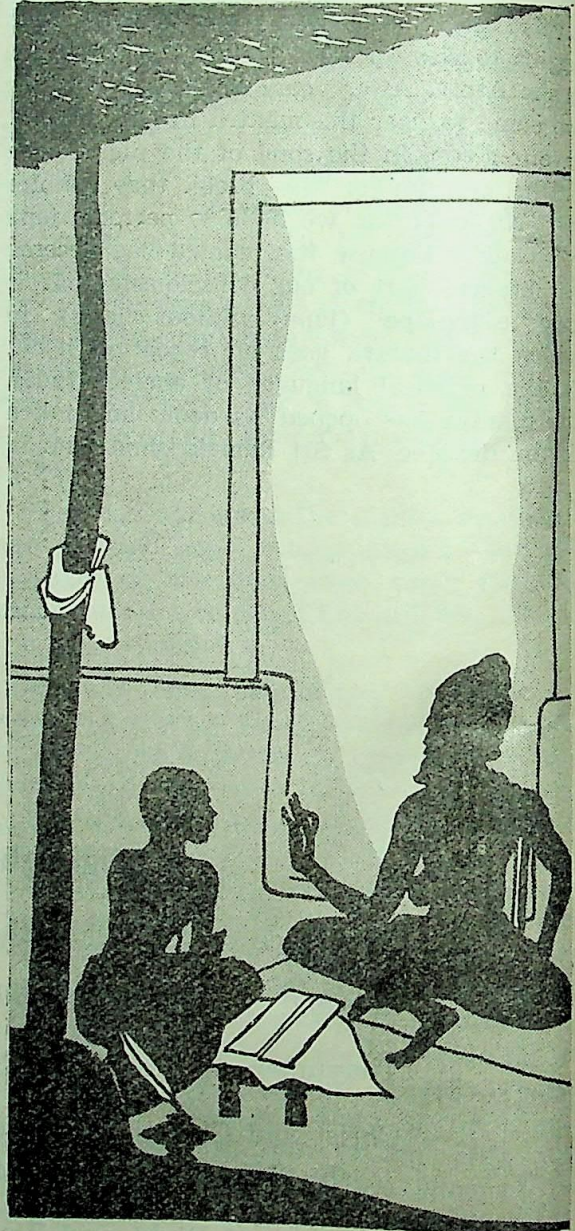
By
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI

DHARMA is the fundamental basis of life.

All other things vanish, they are perishable ; but dharma is not ; it is eternal, in fact timeless. Hence it gives a purpose to life. It protects those who protect it (*dharmo rakshati rakshitah*). It is a boat that carries us across the ocean of life. It is the root-cause of worldly wealth (*preyas* or *abhyuday*) as also of spiritual wealth (*sreyas* or *nisreyas*). It maintains the whole universe in order and sustains it ; that is why it is called 'dharma', derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhri', which means to support. It is the highest means to the ultimate end of life. But the nature of dharma is subtle and deep. It is beyond the ken of the senses, the mind and the intellect. It is thus suprasensual and supramental.

Dharma is twofold : (1) That which deals with the duties, behaviour or conduct of beings. This is called '*pravritti-lakshana*' as it deals with actions (*karma*). (2) That which is concerned with wisdom that leads to Liberation. This is called '*nivritti-lakshana*' as there is no emphasis on action but on an attitude of resignation. The former conduces to material prosperity, the latter to spiritual well-being. As dharma comprehends both these, it has both these aspects, that is 'karma' and 'jnana' which are complementary to one another when understood in their proper spirit.

According to Hinduism, which is the Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal support, universal and catholic in outlook, there are two main sources of Dharma, the Sruti and the Smriti, other supplementary sources being the conduct of the wise who are conversant with the Vedic teaching and one's own conscience. Sruti and Smriti are the highest authority on dharma. Of these Sruti stands first. Sruti means divine wisdom. Literally,



or rather etymologically, it means 'that which is heard from the voice of God', derived from the Sanskrit root 'sru'. To the ancient Rishis, who were kavis (more than poets — omniscient seers) the hymns

of the Vedas — another name for Sruti — came as direct revelations from the Supreme Being (*kavayah satyasrutayah*). They are also called 'Sruti' because this wisdom was transmitted to the disciples orally by the guru and thus 'heard' by them. Sruti in its limited sense means the four Vedas: Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, along with their Brahmanas, i.e., explanatory ritualistic treatises in prose or verse. In its wider sense Sruti includes, besides these, the Aranyakas (i.e., forest-treatises dealing with philosophical discussions) and Upanishads popularly known as Vedanta. The four Vedas contain prayers to various gods such as Agni, Indra, Maruts, Varuna, Ushas and Yama. They are full of devotional feeling and most of them are exquisite poetry. Behind their outer form there is deep esoteric knowledge and symbolism and they show diverse paths to union with 'that One' underlying the many gods.

The Vedic hymns have the following features:—

(1) The nature of the Vedic gods shows a tendency towards monotheism and non-duality. From the multiple personalities of these gods we arrive in the Samhita literature at a common fundamental principle known as 'Tat' or 'Sat': The gods are many and yet One in principle. Their common characteristics, common descriptions and the references to formless Godhead point to this Oneness.

(2) There are frequent references to the struggle between Sat and Asat, Amrita and Mrityu, Rita and Anrita, light and darkness, gods and demons etc. This shows discrimination between the true path and the false.

(3) The Vedic Aryans who wished to stand by Sat and destroy Asat resorted to the performance of sacrifice, both in its gross and subtle aspects. They appreciated that the whole creation was due to sacrifice. The gods and the Rishis are born from sacrifice. Sacrifice is a pilgrimage that leads men to their destination, that is first worldly prosperity and then the realisation of Truth. Sacrifice is the means of imbibing this Truth. It brings out the essential unity

between men, gods and God. Men and gods co-operate and this enables the universe to run smoothly. The sacrifices for which the Vedic hymns are employed strengthen the truth in man; they further reveal its radiant beauty, joy and strength and by their lustre destroy untruth or evil. Sacrifice is thus identified with truth or law and is called 'Rita' in the Vedas.

(4) An examination of the important philosophical hymns such as Asyavamiya, Nasadiya and Purusha reveal that the world, though having a contingent reality, has no self-subsistent reality. Sat or Tat is the only ultimate reality, and is beyond the range of sense-organs, mind and intellect.

In the words of an eminent Philosopher: "A study of the hymns of the Rigveda (and other Vedas too) is indispensable for any adequate account of Indian thought. They are the source of later practices and philosophies of Indo-Aryans, and a study of them is necessary for a proper understanding of subsequent thought."¹ The Vedas themselves proclaim that they contain secret words '*ninya vachamsi*' and in them² resides the highest Divinity; one who understands this in truth, understands the mystery of the Vedas. The Taittiriya³ Brahmana also states that one who does not know the Veda, i.e., the spirit of the Veda, does not understand Brahman. In the Shatapatha⁴ Brahmana it is said that the hymns in the Rigveda are honey, those in the Samaveda are ghee and those in the Yajurveda are ambrosia. Hence they should be studied with devotion. That the Vedas are an authority in religious and spiritual matters is vouchsafed not only by the Vedas themselves (in the wider sense of the term) but also by the later smriti⁵ literature, Puranas, Histories and the six systems of Philosophy including the Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta. The great Shankara often quotes Sruti in support of

¹ Dr. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 66.

² *Rig Veda* I, 164

³ *Ibid.*, III, 12, 9, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XI, 5, 7, 5.

⁵ *Manusmriti*, II, 13; IV, 147.

his statements⁶ and says reverently that the Vedas are an independent valid authority in their own sphere as the sun is in the matter of perception of colours; other means of knowledge such as perception (*pratyaksha*) are of no avail in this field. The great Acharyas like Ramanuja and the great saints like Jnaneshwara universally proclaim the greatness of Sruti. "There is no Mother like Sruti for the world", says the latter.

The Vedic hymns are the most ancient literature of mankind. But they are primitive in the sense in which some Western scholars have made out. Their deep and mystic contents show this. They are full of rich symbolism. The deities or gods in them are of symbolic nature. For example, Aditi who is known as the Mother of the gods and who is described as Universal and identified with gods is the *Adi-Shakti* (*Prakriti*) presiding over the universe, the power of the supreme Being. The sun-god is the symbol of our self revealed through everything and the support of everything.

In the Brahmanas, which form a link between the Vedic hymns and the Upanishads, with the development of sacrifice, philosophical ideas began to be formulated instead of symbolically expressed. Life here on earth was regarded as secondary, while the immortal Divine Life was supremely valued. Sacrifice with all its symbolism was an embodiment of Truth or Immortality. There is a philosophy of sacrifice. The principal tenets of the Upanishads, which came later, have their beginning in the Brahmanas. For example, the discussion of *Vidya* (knowledge) and *Avidya* (ignorance) occurs here in *Shandilya Vidya*.⁷

The Upanishads form the essence of the Vedas as also their concluding portion and are hence called 'Vedanta'. They are called works on knowledge (*Jnana-kanda*), while the Vedic hymns and Brahmanas are called works on ritual (*karma-kanda*), though this division is not absolute. They are not so exclusively set apart as this would indicate. The Vedas contain philosophical

matters dealing with knowledge and the Upanishads deal with action and *Upasana* of various kinds. For example, *Mundaka* and *Ishavasya* glorify action done in a selfless spirit, with understanding. In the Upanishads poetry and philosophy go hand in hand. They impart and explain in various dialogues and stories the quintessence of the wisdom of the Rishis, indicated by 'OM'. The four great sentences (*Mahavakyas*) in these Upanishads are :—

(I) 'Consciousness is Brahman' (*Prajanam Brahma*), (II) 'I am Brahman' (*aham Brahmasmi*), (III) 'That thou art' (*Tat tvam asi*) and (IV) 'This self is Brahman' (*ayam atma Brahma*).

The Upanishads are the fountain-head of all Hindu philosophies and scriptures, such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Bhagavata* and the later mystic poetry of mediaeval times.

Smriti are scriptures next in value and authority to *Sruti*. They are recorded recollections (*smriti* from '*smri*' to remember) of those great Sages who had deeply studied the Vedas and mastered their precepts, their injunctions as well as their prohibitions. While the *Sruti* is divine revelation, *Smriti* are man-made, products of mature minds. What is left implicit in the *Sruti* is made explicit by the *Smritis*; while only a few can understand the real import of the *Sruti* the masses can understand and follow the *Smriti*. The former are meant for the few, the latter for all. The vision of life that is given by the *Sruti* is applied to all walks of human life by the *Smriti*. While the *Sruti* is true for all time, the *Smriti* are both eternally and relatively true, suited to the times in which they were written, and are not sacrosanct. They pervade the whole expanse of a man's life from his embryonic state to death and even after that. They deal with :—

- (1) Customs, conventions, rites (*achara*) to be followed by an individual;

⁶ *Brahma Sutra Sankara Bhashya*, II, 1, 1.
Bhagavad Gita, XV, 15; XVI, 1; XVII, 15.

⁷ *Shatapatha Brahmana*, X, 6, 3.

- (2) Relationship of individual and society (vyavahara), i.e., dealing with other persons.
- (3) Expiations (prayaschittas).

They mention the duties and rights of all the four castes — Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra — of persons in the four stages (ashramas) of life — Brahmacharya (celibate student stage), Garhastya (house-holder stage), Vanaprasthya (retired forest dweller stage) and Sannyasa (renunciation) — of woman and her status in society, of the king and his administration. They throw light on legal matters; they discuss libations to be offered to the ancestors, the three debts — to the Gods, the fathers and the Rishis — dharma and its place in life and the supreme value of self-knowledge, the ultimate end of human life. In short, they are the science of dharma (Dharmashastra). The dharma expounded in this shastra comprehends all the aspirations of man, leading up to the highest, that is the everlasting Beatitude for the realization of which all other aspirations and pursuits are adjusted and synthesized. This is true in the case of Smriti like those of Manu and Yajnavalkya. The works of the six systems of philosophy are also known as smriti, e.g., Samkhya smriti, Yoga smriti, etc. They are more or less specialised in their subject matter which is a particular 'darsana' or 'view point'.

Smriti usually follow Sruti. When, however, there is a divergence⁸ between a Sruti text and a smriti text, the Sruti text should be followed. When there is a conflict between one Smriti-text and another, that which follows the Sruti should be accepted. If there are Smriti-texts which are not to be traced to the Sruti, they should be accepted by inference that the Sruti text might be lost. Again if there is divergence between two Sruti texts, they should be treated as optional.⁹

Although traditional, the doctrine of Sruti and Smriti cannot be held to be universally applicable, for the reason that, a Jivanmukta being in a state of conscious identity with the source of the Sruti, his utterances must be held to be on a par with them. That means that a scripture such as the *Yoga Vasishtha*, in which it is declared that the verses are mantras and the doctrine is the voice of one's Self, or the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is the word of Sri Krishna himself, or the few brief writings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi must be accorded the authority of Sruti. Indeed it is noteworthy that the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras* of Veda Vyasa although not formally classed as Sruti, form together with the Upanishads, the Prasthanas Traya, or 'three-fold scripture' of Hinduism.

⁸ *Jabala Smriti*.

⁹ *Manusmriti*, II, 14.

(This) misery, is due to the body; the body is the product of Karma. Karma proceeds due to the thought 'I am the body' (ego). The ego is beginningless and is caused by nescience.

— *Adhyatma Ramayana*.

Moksha or liberation from bondage is not situated in the sky, or on the earth, or in the nether world. When by the annihilation of all desires, the mind itself is annihilated, that state is called Moksha.

— *Mahabharata*, (*Santi Parva*).

THE VEDIC HYMNS

By
ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE

Prof. Abinash Chandra Bose was Professor of English in Rajaram College, Kolhapur, under the old Bombay University (1920-1945) and after that Principal and Professor of English under Calcutta and Saugar Universities for eleven years. When, half-way through his career as teacher of English, he was working on his thesis "Mysticism in Poetry", ancient and modern, in Trinity College, Dublin, the Vedas in which he had almost life-long interest attracted him more than ever in the perspective of world literature. Since then he has been making fresh translations of Vedic hymns, being guided by oriental scholarship and also to an extent by the Indian spiritual tradition, and aiming at strict fidelity to the original, as poetry and as prayer. His books include *Three Mystic Poets, a Study of W. B. Yeats, A. E. and Rabindranath Tagore*; *The Call of the Vedas* and the recently published *Hymns from the vedas*. Stanzas quoted in this article are from the last book.

THERE are four Vedas (or Samhitas, Collections of Vedic hymns). They are the Rigveda (consisting of 1,028 hymns divided into ten sections, with a total of 10,552 stanzas), the Samaveda (derived mostly from the Rigveda for musical rendering, having 1,875 stanzas), the Yajurveda (the Vajasaneya Samhita Madhyamdina text having 1,975 stanzas and prose units, divided into forty chapters of which all except the last are intended for recitation in ritualistic worship) and the Atharvaveda (having 730 hymns in 5,987 stanzas and prose units divided into twenty sections, with no connection with ritual, and hence sometimes called Brahma Veda, the Veda of Prayer, though certain prayers, described by some as spells, are associated with a minor form of ritual).

The Vedic poets have called themselves by different names which include seer (*rishi*), sage-poet (*kavi*), inspired sage (*vipra*), one in whom the higher intellect (*dhi*) is active (*dhira*), maker (*kari*, *karu*, 'poet' in the original Greek sense), the wise one (*vedhas*), one who is brilliant in mental power (*manishin*), etc. There are women rishis, of whom two (Vak, the daughter of Rishi Abhrina, and Ghosha) are eminent.

A poem has been called in the Veda a song (*gir*), a praise-song (*stoma*, *uktha*), a prayer (*brahman*) prayerful thought

(*manman*), work of *dhi* (*dhiti*, *dhi*), etc. Verse for recitation is *rik*, for singing *Saman* and for ritualistic worship *yajus*. A complete poem, generally a hymn, is called a *sukta* (literally, well-spoken). The terms *vak* (holy 'speech') and *chamdas* (metrical language) are used for the Vedic texts as a whole.

The Vedic language is accentual (unlike the later classical Sanskrit) and consists mostly of single words, compound words having rarely more than two members. The short words with their stress and pitch acquire the natural flow and vigour of the spoken language. The Vedic poet has put them into well defined metrical patterns with full scope for the free and spontaneous expression of his inspiration. A poet has himself described the hymns sung by him and other rishis:

Like birds splashing in water, that
keep watch
Like the loud voice of the thundering
clouds
Like joyous streams bursting from the
mountain
Our hymns have sounded to the Deity.
(RV. X. 68, also AV.)

The freshness, solemnity and power that mark the Vedic hymns are found to belong as much to the sound-image as to the sense-

in a comprehensive way, characteristic of their outlook. It is said in the Veda that "the Deity (Varuna) is of our own land (*samdesya*) and of foreign lands (*videsya*)" (RV. IV. 16); that the Deity (Indra) "is for ever the common Lord of all (RV. IV. 32, VIII. 65)". There are prayers in the Veda for the atonement of sins "committed against a stranger" as well as near and dear ones (RV. V. 35), and of "sins committed against man (*manushya*) committed knowingly or unawares" (YV. 8. 13). In the Hymn to the Earth the poet recognises the many peoples "who speak various tongues . . . and have various religious rites according to their places of abode (AV. XII. 1). The Vedic Rishis have been called "world-builders" (*bhutakritah*, AV. VI. 133, XII. 1). They addressed themselves to mankind, and gave the holy words (*vak*) "to their own people and to the foreigner" (YV. 26. 2), and provided a universal basis for the higher life of the spirit.

About the sacred speech (*vak*), including the hymns, it is said in the Veda that it was "the first and foremost of speech uttered by the sages, giving (the unnamed) a name" and that "it was their best and was stainless", and through this they, "with love (*preman*) revealed the Divine Secret within their souls (*guhanihitam*, hidden in the cave, a symbolic expression)".

It is added that "when the poets formed the speech with their spirit, they strained it as people strain flour with a sieve (removing unworthy matter derived from the lower levels of the poets' experience of life)" (RV. X. 71). The elimination of what was merely personal from the poetry of the Vedic seers, which derives its intensity from their spiritual passion, has produced a type of lyric poetry that is remarkable for its purity, freshness and vigour. The analogy of the rushing mountain-stream seems very apt for it.

A Vedic poet says elsewhere: "Not by our human nature (*purushatva*) do we know the Deity" (RV. V. 48). In another hymn it is said that the Deity "reveals the hymn in the heart" (RV. I. 105). There has been

the traditional belief that the Veda is "not man-made" (*apaurusheya*). To this belief must be chiefly attributed the preservation of the Vedas by unbroken oral tradition.

It is natural that what the poet gave through love should, as the Veda says in the hymn on Vak, contain the spirit of love ("The holy beauty of friendship lies hidden in Vak") and binds people in friendship (RV. X. 71).

AJA and JATA, the Unmanifest and the Manifested Divine.

The Vedic sages have two different approaches to the Divine, one leading to the Absolute (*aksharam*), unmanifested (*aja*, literally 'unborn') and single (*ekam*; in later Vedic and post-Vedic literature, *advaitam*, non-dual); and the other to the Absolute, manifested (*jata*, literally, 'born') in the glory of creation as Deva, Being of Light.

The unmanifested Absolute is pure Being, formless, attributeless, nameless and sexless, and is generally referred to in cryptic words in the neuter singular, like the pronoun That (*tat*), the numeral One (*ekam*) and the symbolic word Brahma for the Absolute. The indeclinable Om, also called *Pranava* ("the symbol of sastra i.e., of Veda, as the Yajurveda calls it; 19.25) means the Ultimate Reality. Sometimes *sat* (Reality) is added to *tat* and *ekam*. For example:

That (*tat*) was Supreme in the universe
(RV. X. 120)

Who is the One (*ekam*) in the form of
the Unborn (*aja*) that has supported the
six spheres of the world? (RV. I. 164)

Vena (the sage) saw That Reality (*tat sat*) in which all come to have one
home (YV. 32. 8).

Om, the eternal Brahma (YV. 40. 17.)

The adjective *aksharam* (Eternal, Absolute) in the neuter singular has been specially associated with the Veda ("What Veda-knowers speak of as *aksharam*", Bhagavad Gita, 8. 11).

The Manifested Absolute, Deva, has name, form and attributes which are different with the Rishis' different visions of the Divinity in his glory. Here the neuter gender of the Unmanifested Absolute replaced by the masculine or feminine; and to the singular number are added the dual and the plural to give embodiment to the sage-poets' numerous visions. The Veda has spoken of the manifestation of the Eternal in creation :

When the earliest of the mornings dawned
the great (*mahat*) Eternal (*aksharam*)
was manifested (lit. 'born') on the path
of light.

Now the statutes of the Devas will be
honoured. Great is the single Godhood
of the Devas (RV. III. 55).

While dealing with the manifold visions of the Manifested Divine as Deva, the sages became poetically eloquent. The language was enriched by impressions of the visible world. So, instead of the cryptic 'That' (*tat*), the One (*ekam*), etc., there were words that, by way of description and comparison, brought form and colour and the warmth of life. The Deva came close to man's hearth and home.

The difference between the Unmanifest and the Manifested Divine will be evident from a consideration of the ideas of creation in each case. The following is an account of creation in relation to the Unmanifest :

.... That One (*ekam*) which had been
covered by the void through the might
of *tapas* (spiritual fire) was manifested
(lit. 'born'). (RV. X. 129).

In the following, creation is seen in relation to the Deva :

In love thou (Indra) madest the dawn
glow,

In love thou madest the sun shine.

(RV. II. 35).

By using later terminology we may say that, from the Unmanifest to the Manifested, there is a transition from Rajayoga (or Rajaguhayoga), the Path of Mysticism (with which goes Jnanayoga, the Path of Knowledge) to Vibhuti-yoga, the Path of Splendour (with which are associated

Bhaktiyoga, the Path of Love and Karma-yoga, the Path of Action).

The Vedic sage finds the Deva glorious not only as Monarch (*raja*) but also as Poet (*kavi*), as Architect (*visvakarman*) as Physician (*bhishaj*), as hero (*sura*), as sage (*vipra*) and so on. And the Deity is not only Father, but also Mother, Father-and-Mother-in-one, and a Maiden to whom the worshippers are 'like sons of the mother'. The Deva is also Brother, Son, Friend and Guest (an honoured visitor to a house). And he is like the lover to the beloved, like a bridegroom to the bride, like a husband to the wife.

The Veda insists in several ways on the identity of the Devas with the Unmanifest Absolute. It does so by a direct statement like that of the 'single Godhood of the Devas' or like the following :

The One Reality (*ekam sat*) the sages
speak of in many ways (RV. I. 164, AV.).

At times they speak of a Deva or Devi as if he or she were the Absolute, as in :

Suparna who is One the wise poets figure
in many ways by their words

(RV. X. 11).

Aditi is all the Devas, Aditi the five
peoples (RV. I. 89. AV).

Savitr is One, One and Sole. He is
not called the Second, Third, Fourth....

In him all the Devas become the One
Alone (AV. XIII. 4).

Sometimes a Deva is identified with another Deva or with all the rest. For instance, Agni is identified with Indra, Vishnu, Varuna Mitra, Aditi, Sarasvati and others. (RV. II. 1). Varuna is identified with Indra (RV. IV. 42). Sometimes thirty-three Devas are spoken of, but the Veda does not set any limit to their number :

Such is thy greatness, bounteous Lord,
that endless bodily forms are thine.
Millions are in thy million, or thou art a
billion in thyself. (AV. XIII. 4).

All these ideas have led to a far-reaching conclusion : that one can worship any Deva or Devi as the Supreme Being, the

Creator and Ruler of the world and as the almighty Lord, Father or Mother, without rejecting another Deva, similarly worshipped by somebody else. We find in the Veda that a Deva, whatever his name is held to be the Deva. For instance, Indra is 'the One manifested as the Lord of races'; Agni is the Emperor; Varuna, 'the Emperor sublime', Pushan, 'the Supreme Ruler', etc. Again any one Deva may be described in the superlative as 'the mightiest', 'the most beloved', 'the most beneficent', etc. (RV). As their single Godhood is accepted there is no conflict.

The Veda also declares: "All your names, Devas, are venerable (*namasya*), laudable (*vandya*) and adorable (*yajniya*)" (RV. X. 63).

RITA, SATYA, TAPAS

The attributes that the Absolute in the manifested state receives as Deva are based on the Vedic values, which have been clearly stated. "At the beginning of creation," says the Veda, "Rita (Eternal Order, Law) and Satya (Truth) were born (i.e., manifested) out of blazing Tapas (spiritual fire RV. X. 190)". Rita is cosmic Order—the Natural Law and the symmetry and beauty produced by it, as well as Moral Order demanding goodness and justice. Tapas, the spiritual fire, which works behind these, is the purifying principle that makes Rita and Satya flourish. In the Devas Tapas, Rita and Satya find their full expression. "Devas are always pure", says the Veda (SV. 442). A Deva is described as 'born of Rita', and 'Son of Satya' and as 'one having his power in Satya' (RV). Sometimes a Deva is spoken of as Rita or Satya itself.

Men are like the Devas in being a manifestation of the Divine. So a sage prays: "We have, bounteous Ones (Devas), established our perpetual brotherhood with you, with harmony, in the mother's womb." (RV. VIII. 83). But men are different from Devas in two respects—their imperfection and their mortality (the latter referring to their body only, not the spirit which is immortal). While Devas are "attached to

Rita and Satya and are full of light, and holy" (RV), there are among men "those who are opposed to Rita (*anrita*) and opposed to Satya (*asatya*)". (RV. IV. 5). So the Devas are models for men and their Guides and Rulers. "They bind the breakers of Eternal Law (Rita; RV)". The Veda also says: "It is known to wise people that there is rivalry between truth and untruth. Of these two, that which is true (*satya*) and straight the Deva protects. The untrue he destroys". So the conflict between Rita and Anrita, Satya and Asatya is the conflict between good and evil. These are often described by the prefixes *su* and *du*, respectively. The following prayers point to this moral conflict:

Bar me, Agni, against evil conduct (*duscarita*), engage me in good conduct (*sucarita*) YV.

May we have the good, loving mind all our days. (RV.)

May we know aright both truth and falsehood. (RV)

May the purpose of my mind be true (*satya*). May I be guiltless of the least aggression. (RV).

May my mind will what is good. (YV).

The cause of Rita has to be defended against aggression. Indra, the Champion of Rita, is shown in the Veda to be continually fighting against Vritra, the enemy of Rita, who tries to stop its operation. Indra defends his own dominion, Svarajya (based on Rita), by his victory over Vritra, won through valour. Deva Indra is a model for men in the fight against their Vritras, aggressors against their Svarajya. So they are called on "to be heroic, following the example of Indra (RV. X. 103, SV. YV. AV.)." At his coronation a king receives a weapon with the injunction, "With thee may this man kill Vritra—the power of evil (YV. 10. 8)," which means that war should be in defence of justice.

There is a call to men to fight the hard battle of life valiantly:

The rocky stream flows on. Hold you all together.

Be heroic and cross over, my comrades!
 Leave here those who are evil-minded,
 Let us cross to powers that are undiseased
 (X. 53).

The Atharva Veda which adapts this from the Rig Veda adds, drawing the idea of the second line from another Rigveda hymn (X. 18) where people are enjoined to become 'pure, clean and godly':

Strive for the lustre that belongs to all
 the Devas, becoming pure and bright
 and purifying.

And, getting across the difficult paths,
 may we, heroes all, enjoy a hundred
 years! (AV. XII. 2).

To be pure, bright and purifying — here heroism finds a new field for conquest: to rise above human nature in the raw and build up and help another build a spiritual personality. The Vedic system of education, Brahmacharya (AV. XI 50 requires the boy (boy or girl) to be reborn to a new life, the Acharya becoming as it were, the spiritual mother). So educated, "the Brahmancharin goes performing his duties, and he becomes a limb of the Devas' own body" (RV. X. 109). "He, grasping the worlds together, (*lokan samgrihya*; *lokasangraha* of Bhagavad Gita, III. 20) constantly draws them near." (AV. XI. 5).

The householder's life (*Grihastashrama*) which follows Brahmacharya and is based on marriage and conjugal love and ruled by Rita as both natural and moral law (AV. XIV. 1) has its own sanctity. In the wedding ritual the newly married husband tells his wife that he is Saman (sacred song) and she Rik (the sacred verse), and they are like the Divine cosmic couple, Heaven and Earth (AV. XIV. 2).

The Veda also speaks of the Acharya (teacher) who, in his forest ashrama, teaches pupils, bounds at their initiation by the vow, "Here I approach truth (*satya*) beyond untruth" (*anrita*, YV. I. 5). Then, there is the Vedic Muni with long locks (*kesin*) who is "a comrade (*sakha*) of Devas in doing good (*sukrita*) and treads in the path of wild beasts and, knowing men's hearts,

comes to them as a sweet friend (*svadu sakha*) most gladdening" (RV. X. 136).

The ethical and aesthetic aspects of Rita are often associated with each other. For instance, Devi Ushas, beautiful and smiling, is called 'blessed' (*bhadra*), and asked to give worshippers 'every blissful (*bhadra*) thought (RV. I. 123).' She also leads people from sleep to waking and to the pursuit of their avocations in life (RV. I. 113). "Send us what is good", prays a sage-poet to Savitr. "For noble power, we, free from sin, contemplate all that is beautiful" (RV. V. 82). Indra, the heroic defender of Rita as Moral Law, is also "the Model for every kind of beauty (*rupa*)" (RV. VI. 47), and Varuna is not only a ruler enforcing Moral Law but also "a Poet (*kavi*) who by his poetic power (*kavya*) cherishes manifold forms of beauty (*rupa*) like the sky" (RV. VI. 47).

SAMJNANA, UNITY THROUGH JNANA

The prefix *sam*—in the Veda carries more than its literal meaning, 'together'. Describing the first appearance of Devas, the Veda says that they were 'held together' (*samrabdha*), and, by comparing them to a group of dancers, indicates that they were 'held together by an inner harmony'. Similarly, Samjnana¹ among the Devas is the loving unity brought about by their knowledge (*jnana*) of each other, and of an inner harmony (owing to their 'single Godhood') that binds them together.

The Veda recommends this harmony to men in their different social relationships. Thus man and wife after the marriage vow pray for the unity of hearts (*sam-hridaya*). A sage enjoins Samjnana on members of a family, asking them to "love each other as the mother-cow loves the calf born of her" (AV. III. 30). A sage in the Yajurveda expresses the desire that the political and spiritual powers (*kshatra*, *brahma*) "should move together in harmony". (20, 25). In

¹ To Vedic *sam*— corresponds to the Greek *sum*—, in the English form *sy*—, as in 'symphony', in which the prefix means more than a mere combination of sounds; it also implies a harmony linking the sounds together.

the closing hymn of the Rigveda, members of a state are called upon to practise samjnana like the Devas by "knowing each other's mind (*sam-jna*)" and "by meeting together and speaking together" (and thus establishing an inner harmony). Again, there is a prayer in the Veda for 'Samjnana (union through knowledge of each other) with foreign people', concluding with the desire that one's own people and foreign people should unite.

May we unite in our minds, unite in our purposes, and not fight against the Divine Spirit (*daivya manah*) in us. May the battle cry not rise amidst many slain. . . . (AV. VII. 52).

So we find that the Veda which demands heroic defence of Svarajya against aggression, also shows the way of preventing armed clashes, and destruction of life caused by these. The Veda also wants man, by his strength, to establish friendly relations with other living beings. 'Make me strong', a Sage prays, desiring that he and all living beings (*sarva bhuta*) 'should look upon one another (*Sam-iksh*) with a friendly eye.' (IV. 36. 18).

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

The reference to the spirit takes us from the Devas, Manifestations of the Absolute in creation, to the indwelling spirit in man and in the universe. The Veda speaks of the Spirit in the neuter singular as *yaksham*. There is also the word *atma* (commonly used in English in the original form as 'Atman'), in the masculine singular, meaning the soul or self. These words are used both in the individual and the universal sense.

The Rigveda speaks figuratively of "two beautiful-winged birds, knit together, friends, which have found their abode in the same tree, of whom one eats the sweet pippala fruit, and the other that does not eat, looks on." (RV. I. 164, AV). The tree here is believed to imply the human body, and the two birds, the individual self and the Supreme Self (*jivatma* and *paramatma*) respectively. In the Atharva Veda *yaksham*

and *atma* replace the two birds, and a large, beautiful flower replaces the tree. The Veda speaks of "a lotus with nine portals, covered under three bands (*guna*), in which dwells the spirit with the Atma within, that the Veda-knowers know." (X. 8). Then follows a stanza in the grand style of the Veda, describing the Atma, "serene, unaging, youthful" (*Ibid*).

We have found the Rigveda speaking of 'the great Eternal' (*mahad aksharam*), in the transcendental sense. The Atharva Veda speaks 'of the great Spirit' (*mahad yaksham*): "The great Spirit lies in the centre of the worlds and on the surface of water." And the Devas who are described as having appeared with the birth (manifestation) of the Absolute (on the relative plain of reality) are here said to "attach themselves to that Spirit (*yaksham*) like branches to the trunk of a tree." (AV. X. 7. 38).

We may go back to Rigvedic symbolism and to a Rishi who in a hymn on Universal Agni (*vaisvanara agni*) says: "A steady Light (*jyotih*), swifter than thought lies in the midst of moving things to show the way, and all the Devas, united in spirit (*samanasah*) and in wisdom, proceed unerringly to that One Intelligence (*Kratu*, in later terminology, *chit*)." The sage-poet experiences the presence of that within himself, but cannot perceive it physically, or comprehend it intellectually, though he responds to it with delicate poetic sensitiveness, typical of the Veda:

My ears strain to hear, my eyes to see
this wide-spreading Light within my
spirit:

My mind roams afar beyond its confines.
What shall I speak, and what, indeed,
shall I think? (RV. VI. 9)

The Yajurveda, in its concluding portion, conveys what are given as the dying words of a sage, ending with: "The Purusha who is in the sun, who is here and there—I am He, Om, the Supreme Brahman" (40.17).

Here not only is the Immanent identified with the Transcendental, but the individual

too is identified with the Universal. This is Vedanta, pursued in the Upanishads and by later sages, saints and philosophers.

Philosophers in different ages of India have, not unjustifiably, sought final support for their theories from the Veda. But the

Veda is much more than philosophic theory. It has described itself as *visvarupa*, omniform (AV.). The Vedic Rishi has the poet's interest in reality in all its facets. He reveals their truth and beauty and invites us to share his noble visions.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

45. Only mad folk perplexed
By mistaking for a fact
This fiction of a world,
But not the truly wise,
Find joy in anything
But Awareness of Being.
46. Those who know the joy that flows
from the knowledge of true being
Will never walk the weary ways
Of the false, eightfold¹ world
Whose pleasures are all transient
Some even bestial, sensual, base.
47. Not in one single thing on earth
Is there a gleam of joy.
How then is the muddled mind
Deluded into thinking
That things yield joy?
48. Knowing clearly and accepting
Your true nature and identity,
Abiding in the heart for ever
As the pure Supreme alone,
Play perfectly your human role,
Tasting every pain and pleasure
In common with all creatures.
49. Though they examine everything
And attain the ultimate truth,
The wise put on no strange behaviour.
Therefore let your outward conduct
Conform to that of your own people.
50. Lord Ramana has in his mercy
Revealed to us that we are the world
And that from us all things derive
Their firm being. He has thus
proclaimed
As true the tenet of Mistakenness,
Putting away all other doctrines.
51. Because the Self becomes itself
The world with all these names
and forms,
It's not the efficient cause that creates,
Preserves and then destroys the world
52. Don't ask : "How did this mistake arise
And grow inveterate, this ignorance
Of the Self's self-transformation as
the world?"
Search and find
To whom this happened.
Then the settled error is no more.
53. What is the Self's
Self-transformation as the world?
A twist of straw appearing as a snake.
Look hard. You see no snake at all.
There was no transformation and never
any world.

¹The phenomenal world manifested in eight aspects: ether, fire, air, water, earth, Sun, Moon and living beings.

THE POWER OF THE MANTRAS

By
M. P. PANDIT

In his book 'Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishad', reviewed in this issue, Mr. Pandit shows how far beyond their merely rational meaning the Vedic hymns go. Their verses are mantras, and mantras are not something concocted by an author, but revealed to a Rishi. Their potency is due to a correspondence between the vibrations of physical sound in them and those of a higher level of *shabda*. In this note he gives us a further elucidation of the theory of mantras.

IT is one of the fundamental perceptions of the ancients that Reality turned towards manifestation reveals itself as primordial Sound: the Brahman is nada, God is Logos. The first stir, spanda, of the Creative Consciousness renders itself as a vibration of sound, *shabda*, and all else issues from this Sound-Form of the Reality. Each form in creation has this Sound-origin at its base. It may belong to any plane of existence, it may be a god, it may be a thought-form or a current of force or a material object on earth. At its root there is a Sound-substance from which it has evolved into this manifestation. Naturally, this Sound is not the sound of our physical world, but it is the Sound of the plane of supreme Ether, *paramavyoman*. Indeed, it translates itself into appropriate forms on the different levels of creation. It is only the last stage of this rendering of sound-form that is human speech. And when any particular word or group of words in our speech is such a projected correspondence of a supreme Sound-form, it is called a mantra.

Thus the mantra is a transcript in terms of human speech of the basic sound-body of any truth or form in creation. By dwelling upon such a word or groups of words one can connect oneself with the prototype on the higher planes and evoke the truth embodied in that original Sound-form to manifest. It is an occult law that if one can recreate the conditions in which something first manifested, an inducement, a pressure, is exerted for that thing to manifest again.

In the *Mantra-Shastra* each Deity is conceived as having its own sound-form which

is rendered at the human level in the body of the letters of a mantra revealed to the seer. By concentrating upon this physical nodus one evokes the Deity ensouled in its corresponding sound-form above to manifest. Rapport is established between the person who waits upon the mantra and the Truth at its head.

Naturally a mantra of this type is not concocted by the human mind. It is not a matter of clothing an idea with metrical form. The Word comes into being reverberating from the depths of an eternal Silence and settles in the recesses of the heart. There it is brooded upon by the central consciousness till it is assimilated and acquires sufficient individuation in this world of flux. When it is so processed, *hrda tastan*, carved by the heart, it is taken up by the intellect and subjected to a further process of fusion and then clothed in an appropriate thought-form. This thought-form flows in its inevitable sound-body, and we have the Word.

This is the sacred character of the mantra around which a whole science was built up by the seers of yore. A mantra is not a convenient means for concentration, for arresting the wayward tendencies of the mind; it is not even a vehicle to connect oneself with a Deity; the mantra is the body of the Deity, in a sense it is the Deity itself. It is when one looks upon the mantra in this spirit, adores it, takes to it with the love that one reserves for the Divine Beloved that the mantra reveals its true nature, yields its truth and becomes one with the upasaka, the practisant. He attains identity with the ensouled Deity.

THE YOGA VASISHTA,

GOSPEL OF SELF-ENQUIRY

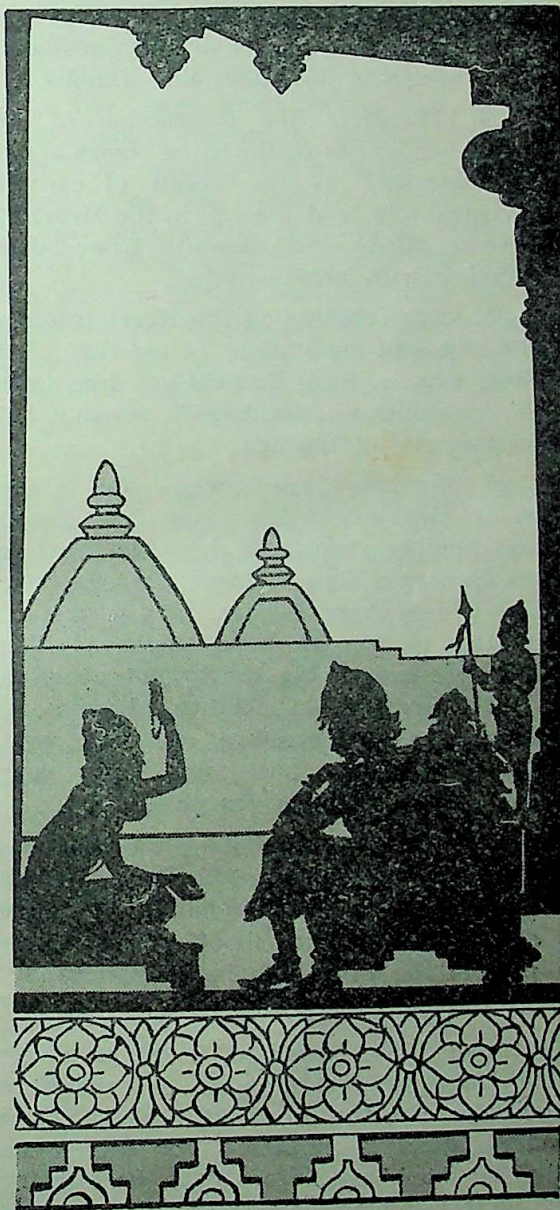
By
Dr. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

SRI RAMA, the Seventh Avatar according to the traditional Puranic list, the hero of the great epic the *Ramayana*, was given the true, ancient, Advaitic teaching by his Guru Vasishtha. The *Yoga Vasishtha* is the book recording this. It is sometimes also known as the 'Maharamayana' or 'Greater Ramayana'. It can therefore be considered, together with the *Ramayana*, the scripture of this Avatar, the *Ramayana* recording the life of Rama and the *Yoga Vasishtha* his teaching, that is the teaching received and transmitted by him. Both are said to have been written by the sage Valmiki, a contemporary of Vasishtha and Rama. It is a book, its author says, for one who is alive to the mystery of his life and the world around him and is stirring from the stupor of ignorance but needs help to awaken. There are many such in the world to-day, and it is a source of shame that such a book lies little used in our country and almost unknown abroad.

It is remarkably modern in tone, or perhaps rather timeless. It was often quoted by Sri Ramana Maharshi or referred to as an authority on Atma Vidya, Spiritual Knowledge. Again and again in quoting passages from it one might be quoting his very words. Verses 21 to 27 of his 'Supplementary Forty Verses on Reality', given below, are from it.

21. "Tell me what it is that is described as the Heart of all the individuals of the world, in which (as in a) big mirror all this universe is perceived as a reflection," Rama once asked the Sage Vasishtha and the latter replied: "After investigation (it has been declared that) the Heart for all individuals is twofold."

22. 'Listen and understand the characteristics of the two, the one to be



accepted and the other to be rejected. That organ which is called the heart and is situated at a particular spot within the

chest of the physical body is to be rejected. That Heart which is of the form of Absolute Knowledge is to be accepted. Though it is both within and without, it is devoid of an inner and an outer side.

23. 'That alone is the Supreme Heart, and in it all this world abides. It is the mirror of all objects, and the abode of all wealth. Hence, for all living beings that Knowledge alone is declared to be the Heart. It is not a part of the perishable body which is insentient like a stone.

24. 'Therefore the destruction of the latent tendencies of the mind comes about spontaneously as the result of earnest endeavour to hold the ego in the Heart of perfect purity and absolute Knowledge, together with breath-control.

25. 'Ever abiding in the Heart through the incessant meditation, "I am that Lord Siva, who is Pure Knowledge, free from all qualitative limitations," remove all attachments of the ego.

26. 'Having investigated the three states (waking, dream, and deep sleep) and holding steadfastly in your heart to the Supreme State which is above them and is free from illusion, play your part in the world, Oh hero Raghava! You have realized in the heart That which is the Substratum of Reality beneath all appearances. Therefore without ever abandoning that viewpoint, play your part in the world as you please.

27. 'As one with feigned enthusiasm and joy, with feigned excitement and hatred, as one taking feigned initiative and making a feigned effort, play your part in the world, Oh hero Raghava!'

It is the teaching of a Jivan-Mukta, Liberated while embodied, based on direct knowledge-experience, and is therefore equivalent to the word of a Guru; and indeed, Vasishtha impressed on Sri Rama that he should not regard it as the teaching of another but as the voice of his own Self speaking through the Guru. It has not merely intellectual value, since the lines of it in the original Sanskrit have the force of mantras and can bring Enlightenment.

Valmiki says of it: "This is a composition in a pleasant and simple style with similes and illustrations that go direct to the heart of the reader. One who has studied and understood it and realized its teachings needs no other sadhana to obtain Liberation. It terminates all suffering and takes one to the state of supreme Bliss beyond the alternatives of pleasure and pain. Full understanding of this book brings Jivan-Mukti, Liberation while embodied."

The introductory story straightaway sets the tone of the book. A king who is practising tapas is visited by a heavenly messenger whom he questions about the delights of heaven and their permanence. He is told that the delights are proportionate to the merits that have produced them and that they last only until his accumulated merit is exhausted, after which the heaven-dweller returns to the world for rebirth. The king declares that he wants none of this but only final Liberation, whereupon he is guided to the ashram of the Sage Valmiki who reads him this book of the instruction of Rama by Vasishtha. Similarly in the *Bhagavad Gita*, it will be remembered, Krishna urges Arjuna to strive beyond the heavens to the final state of Liberation.

The *Yoga Vasishtha* is a massive work of 32,000 couplets divided into six *prakaranas* or sections. Various traditional condensations of it exist, one of which we are thinking of serialising in *The Mountain Path* at a future date. The first *prakarana* is concerned with vairagya or detachment. The youthful Rama has fallen into a state of dejection (and here also there is a certain parallel with Arjuna in the first chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*) and is called before a gathering of Sages at his father's court to explain his trouble. His statement shows that he has already come spontaneously to an understanding of the nature of life. "I have lost all attachment to the world owing to thoughts of discrimination that arise spontaneously: 'Does the cycle of births and deaths bring real happiness? Men are born to die and die to be born again. Plea-

sures are transient and lead to sin and danger. The mutual relationships between sense-objects must be merely imaginary since they are perceived by separate, successive acts of perception. The world as perceived by the mind and the mind that perceives it seem to be unreal. Then why are we attracted by sense-objects? We are like a deer that, led on by a distant mirage, runs from horizon to horizon in search of water. Even though we know that our senses deceive us, we allow ourselves to be enslaved by them like fools. Who am I? And what is this phenomenal world around me? Where does it come from, and why? . . . Why does this world of appearances come into being and grow, and why is it finally destroyed?"

The tone is such as one might use to-day, if intelligent enough; the outlook might be that of a nuclear scientist. He sees, moreover, that the culprit is the mind. "I am possessed by this terrible mind like a boy possessed by a ghost. But in fact this ghost of a mind is unreal. It takes on a form only in imagination, but discrimination shows it to be unreal. And yet this ghost is very hard to control. It burns worse than fire, is harder than diamond, runs after sense-objects like a crow after a bit of meat and then the next moment drops it childishly. It can't stick to any one thing. . . . To restrain the mind is more difficult than drying up the ocean or upheaving a mountain or eating fire. This mind is the cause of the world. Therefore the world depends on it and there would be no outside world if the mind vanished."

He sees that it is craving that corrupts the mind and that craving never satiates, only allures. In vivid language he describes the indignity of childhood, the infatuation of youth and the frustration of age. However, although he can diagnose the trouble he cannot prescribe the cure. Hence his dejection. Similarly with the Maharshi, there were cases of people who knew the whole doctrinal theory when they first came to him and only needed practical guidance.

Next comes the Mumukshu Prakarana in which Vasishtha explains the discipline

required. He explained that the apparently outer world with one's successes and failures in it, one's pleasures and pains, good and evil fortune, is a form dictated by the state of one's mind when quitting the previous incarnation at death. The only reality of it is not its form or appearance but the underlying Self or Brahman. Its illusory reality is to be exposed and the true Self realized by constant discrimination and Self-enquiry fortified by non-egoistical conduct and association with the upright and enlightened. "The most effective remedy for this long-standing disease of samsara (worldly life) is the question 'Who am I?' and 'To whom does this samsara come?' This entirely dissolves it." Here study is no use. "Those whose aspiration after the higher life goes no further than the mere thought of it and who shrink back from undertaking the necessary discipline prescribed by the scriptures fail to achieve their goal. On the contrary, their efforts only produce the darkness of ignorance."

The third section passes from the individual to the cosmic with the subject of creation. Vasishtha explains (as Sri Krishna does in Chapter VIII of the Gita) how the beginningless, endless universe passes through successive phases of manifestation and dissolution, *srishti* and *pralaya*. The world, he explains, has the same sort of reality as a dream. Just as a dream ends when one subsides into deep, dreamless sleep, so the world ends when it subsides into *pralaya*, and all its forms, animate and inanimate, dissolve. However, their seeds of possibility remain in a latent form and burgeon forth again in the next cycle of manifestation.

If the universe is here described as a mere manifestation of the potentialities of Brahman and in the previous section as a manifestation of one's own mind, one corresponds to the macrocosmic and the other to the microcosmic viewpoint. The imperfections of a man's world reflect those of their mind. Therefore, the fourth section, the *Sthiti Prakarana*, is largely concerned with dissolving the *ahankara*, the ego-sense, and seeing all as manifestations of Atma.

"‘This is he’, ‘I am this’, ‘that is mine’, such items make up the mind; it can be dissolved by dwelling on the unreality of them."

The fifth or Upasama Prakarana, as the title suggests, is concerned, like the second, with spiritual training. Being now aware of impersonal atma as well as bodily existence, the seeker is directed still more firmly to Self-inquiry and to the attack on *ahankara* or ego-sense. "After rejecting all that is knowable as ‘not this’, consider the pure consciousness that remains to be your Self."

The last is the Nirvana Prakarana, in which the seeker discovers himself as pure, eternal, impersonal consciousness and the universe as a form he wears. For him now samsara is Nirvana and Nirvana samsara. He sees that there really was no creation, no samsara. "Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere, at any time. It is only Brahman that appears illusorily in the form of the phenomenal world."

The Yoga Vasishtha describes also the various worlds and planes of existence. It speaks of the process of creation and return. Although intricate, its teaching is clearly and simply expressed. It is interspersed with symbolical or illustrative stories. Some are quite long; here is a very short one. A man set out from home in search of a miraculous jewel. At his very doorstep he saw a piece of coloured glass which he picked up and threw away. Then he travelled through many lands, through cities and forests, and found many more bits of glass but never the true gem. At last, after many years, he realized that it was what was lying at his own doorstep — just as Sri Ramana used to say that it is nothing distant or outside yourself that you are seeking. Or, as the Yoga Vasishtha says: "Liberation is not beyond the sky or in the underworld or on earth. It is simply the eradication of desires."

It is the mind that has to be conquered. "Mind and karma go together like fire and heat, so that if one is destroyed the other is inevitably destroyed too."

Ramana said that Self-realization is not one's birthright; it has to be fought for. Even though one is already the Self, it is no use knowing that in theory unless one realizes it. It is no use having a big bank balance unless one is able to draw on it. As long as a man accepts the leadership of the mind deluded by ego-sense he remains in a state of bondage and ignorance. The deluded mind believes in its vulnerability to suffering and therefore meets with suffering. Vasishtha says: "We are sold by none and yet we live like slaves; we are bound by none and yet we live in bondage. We are under the spell of a great hypnotist." The hypnotism consists in accepting the evidence of the senses and identifying ourselves with the body.

Vasishtha, like Ramana, tells us that we have to restrain the mind from its outgoing tendencies and turn it inwards in quest of the Self. "Knowing that by which you know this world, turn the mind inwards and you will see clearly the effulgence of the Self." Taking mundane life at its face value means denying the Self. Not only is the ego-sense, on which mundane life is based caused by ignorance, but it also perpetuates and causes ignorance. "Do not be the understood object or the understanding subject; abandon all concepts and remain simply what you are."

Although distrusting the mind in its false role of self, we should not for that reason dismiss thoughts as unreal or powerless. They are the power that underlies the apparently substantial world. In fact, body and world are merely congealed thought. Objects appear real to the ego-sense or ego-mind, but one must get behind the ego-mind. "Time," Vasishtha says, "is when a thought arises. Space is where a thought arises." And again: "Where the I-thought arises time and space meet."

Bondage and freedom, happiness and misery, are of the mind. What we are is the result of our past thoughts shaping our past actions. But Vasishtha also emphasises the power of thought in the present to override

the past, so that it is always possible to create new destiny to rectify that with which we are already burdened. The I-thought is the first thought that arises and constructs all other thoughts, as indeed Sri Ramana also taught. "If the first person, I, exists then the second and third persons, you and he, will also exist. By enquiring into the nature of the I, the I perishes. With it you and he also perish. The resultant state, which shines as Abso-

lute Being, is one's own natural state, the Self." (*Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 14). The Yoga Vasishta is an incomparable exposition of the need to destroy the deluded ego-mind and enable pure impersonal consciousness to shine forth as the mind beyond all possibility of suffering or ignorance or rebirth. "There is nothing equal to the supreme joy felt by a person of pure mind who has attained the state of simple consciousness and overcome death."

The infinite Self more minute than the minute and greater than the great is set in the heart of the beings here. Through the grace of the Creator one realises Him who is free from desires based on values, who is supremely great and who is the highest ruler and master of all, and becomes free from sorrows.

— *Mahanarayanopanisad.*

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Though dishonoured, thrown down, obstructed or restrained, or insulted by, spat upon, or fouled, the man bent on realizing Atman, though he suffers, will only try to experience the bliss of Atman.

— SRI KRISHNA (*Bhagavatham*, 11th Chap.)

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There the sun does not shine, nor the moon and stars; there lightnings too do not shine — much less this earthly fire! Verily, everything shines, reflecting His glory. This whole world is illumined with His light.

— *Mundakopanisad.*

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As a lump of salt thrown into water becomes dissolved into water and, none, not even an expert can at all pick it up, but from whichever part one takes the water and tastes it, it tastes salty, but there is no longer any lump, even so, my dear Maitreyi, this great, endless, infinite Reality is a solid mass of Intelligence. With the aid of these elements the Self comes out separately as a lump of salt. When this separateness is destroyed, the individualised existence of the self ceases along with them. After attaining oneness with the Supreme Self particular consciousness of the self does not exist. This I say, my dear. So Yajna-
valkya propounded the philosophy of self to his wife, Maitreyi.

— *Brihadaranyakopanisad.*

SRIMAD VALMIKI RAMAYANA

What it has done to shape the genius of the Indian People

Prof. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

NATIONHOOD except for its political overtones is not altogether a modern concept. From very early times the people inhabiting this land have felt the sense of belonging together. This sense of unity can be observed even in the hymns of the Rig Veda. It arose in the first instance from the realization that all of them lived in a territory whose geographical limits were well defined. This strip of land was bounded by the Himalayas in the north and by the ocean on the other three sides. In spite of differences in climatic conditions and the resulting fauna and flora, the land so bounded was intended by nature to be treated as one unit. The awareness that in spite of its vastness the territory was one continuous land-mass engendered the feeling, however vaguely, that the people who inhabited it were united by a common bond.

This feeling of togetherness came to be strengthened as the message of the Veda spread from the land of the five rivers to other parts of the country. In course of time the study of the Vedas and their auxiliaries covered the entire land. Scholars versed in the Vedas and the Upanishads hailing from different parts of the land, met in the learned assemblies sponsored by the rulers. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is the account of a philosophical disputation held in the court of King Janaka in which scholars from the land of the Kurus and Panchala took part. It is also said in the same Upanishad that Ajatasatru, King of Kasi, was fond of receiving scholars and holding discussions with them. In Chandogya (V. 3) we read of Svetaketu, going to the assembly of the Panchalas and in another section of the same Upanishad (V. 11) we are told that five scholars who were intent on knowing the relation between the Atman and the Brahman first

went to Uddalaka Aruni for enlightenment. When he pleaded inability all the six betook themselves to Asvapati, King of Kekaya. Such migrations of scholars must necessarily have fostered the sense of unity.

The next factor which promoted integration was the Sanskrit language and the great literature enshrined in it. A passage from the Upanishad or a verse from the Ramayana or the Mahabharata served to bring together people from the extreme north and the extreme south. The works of Kalidasa enjoyed wide popularity throughout the land and cemented the bonds of unity to a very remarkable extent. Despite differences in other respects, scholars felt a strong sense of brotherhood by virtue of their knowledge of Kalidasa. A Kashmir Brahmin, by virtue of his acquaintance with some of the classics in Sanskrit, received a warm welcome when he journeyed to the south as a pilgrim. The same affectionate welcome awaited the south-Indian Brahmin when he was on a visit to Kasi, Hardwar and Badari. Thus the role of the Sanskrit language and the rich literature that it enshrined in it in implementing the sense of nationhood among the people of this vast sub-continent, despite sharp differences in their customs and manners and the regional languages they spoke, cannot be possibly overstated. For well over a thousand years this language, like Latin in Europe, fostered the sense of unity.

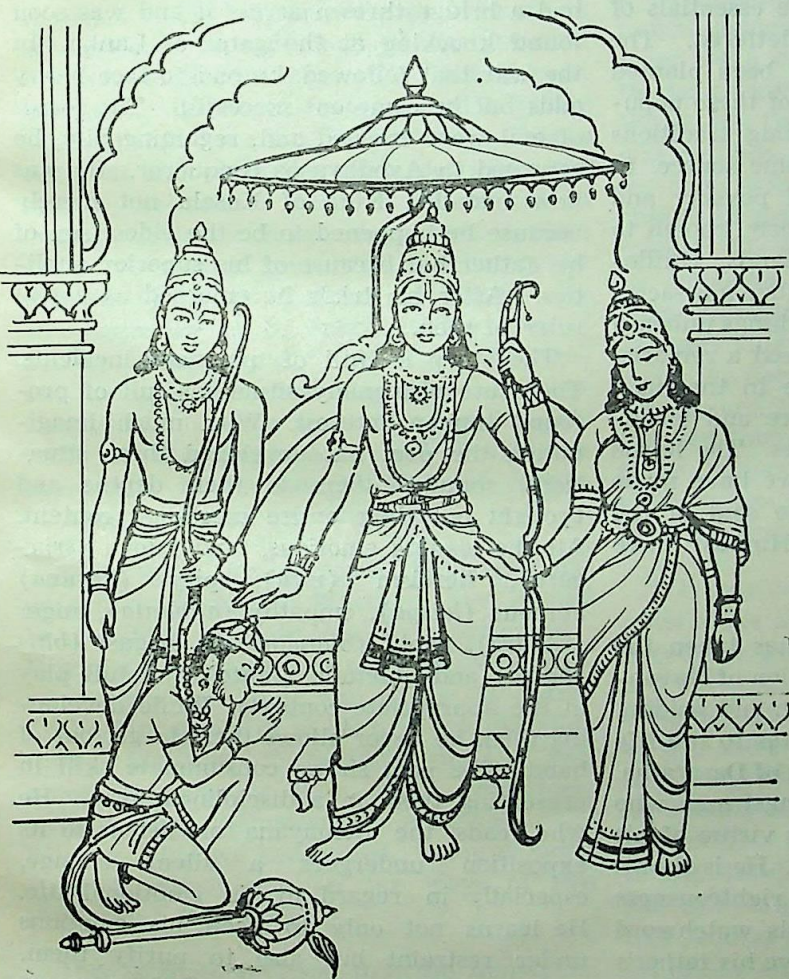
Temples, places of pilgrimage, holy rivers and the habitations of saints and sages attracted people from all over the land and acted as yet another cementing force. No one who visited Kasi felt that his pilgrimage was complete unless he paid a visit to Ramesvaram. Thus the factors that promoted the sense of nationhood among the

people of this land from very early times were chiefly religious and cultural. Dr. Radhakumud Mukerji has set them forth at length with all the relevant documentary evidence in his little book *The Fundamental Unity of India*.

The three famous Acharyas, Sri Shankara, Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhwa, all hailed from the south. They wrote their monumental works in Sanskrit, the *lingua franca* of the country, and not in their respective

direction of nation-building when he founded four religious institutions known as Maths in the four corners of the land to propagate the true faith. He also toured the land from one end to the other on foot, met scholars, held discussions with them and induced them to accept the Vedic religion in its original purity. His services in the direction of promoting the feeling of solidarity among the people of this land are very considerable.

The cultural and religious ties that bound together the elite of the land in the initial stages began slowly to percolate to the masses when the message of the Vedas and the Upanishads came to be presented to them in a manner they could easily grasp. In carrying the teachings of the original texts to the people at large, the Epics and the Puranas have played a very notable part. By means of attractive stories the great lessons of Sruti and Smriti have been brought down to the level of the generality of the people. *Srimad Valmiki Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* are, of course, written in Sanskrit, but they have been interpreted to the public in the regional languages by qualified expositors. Such expositions have been a regular feature in this country



mother-tongues. They were prompted by the feeling that their teachings were meant for the whole land and not only for the inhabitants of a particular locality. Accordingly their commentaries on the *Brahma-Sutras*, the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* are read by scholars all over the country. Sri Shankara took a further step in the

for hundreds of years. In almost every village there is, or until recently was, a *Pauranika* to give discourses, sometimes enlivened by music, bearing on the *Itihasas* and the *Puranas*. Such expositions have served the purposes of adult education eminently well. Listening to them day after day the people at

large imbibed very useful lessons. They came to believe in a Supreme Being who rules the universe, keeps watch over the welfare of the people, rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked and who can be propitiated by right conduct. They have further learnt that we reap as we sow, that our sufferings are due to the misdeeds that we committed in a previous birth and that by eschewing sin and doing meritorious deeds we can confidently look for happiness in the life to come. Thus it happens that the people do not lack the essentials of culture though they are unlettered. The sense of right and wrong has been planted deep in their minds by means of these popular discourses. Their law-abiding traditions are also to be traced to the same source. In spite of being the victims of poverty and disease, they were never formerly known to take the law into their own hands. Guillotines, regions of terror, September massacres and October Revolutions were things unheard of in this country. This is indeed a remarkable phenomenon. The people in the mass have never resorted to violence and bloodshed to redress their grievances. The lesson that we lie in the beds that we have made for ourselves is burnt into the soul of the Indian nation. Even non-Hindus have imbibed this lesson.

Srimad Valmiki Ramayana has taken the pride of place in this noble mission of leavening the mind of an entire nation and guiding its course. The story of it relates to the life and adventures of Sri Rama, son of Dasaratha. He is presented as a man amongst men who rose to superhuman heights by virtue of his great qualities and attainments. He is shown as the living embodiment of righteousness (dharma). Right conduct is his watchword in every situation of life. To save his father's reputation he voluntarily renounced his claims to the post of heir-apparent and betook himself to the forest for a period of fourteen years. Not all the efforts made by Bharatha and Vasishta could make him change this decision. He was firm in his resolve. In his opinion a promise that was solemnly given had to be observed both in the letter and in the spirit. He would allow

no quibbling about it. He braved all the hardships and privations of forest-life with singular courage and equanimity. The climax to his sufferings was reached when his dear partner in life, Sita, was abducted by Ravana, the King of Lanka. When he came to know that his wife had been captured and was held captive in Ravana's pleasure gardens he promptly took the necessary steps to bring about Ravana's destruction and secure her release. The ocean that separated the mainland from Lanka was no bar to him. He had a bridge thrown across it and was soon found knocking at the gates of Lanka. In the war that followed, he had to face heavy odds but he came out successful. The forces of evil were crushed and, regaining Sita, he returned to Ayodhya as conqueror. He was now installed King of Kosala not merely because he happened to be the eldest son of his father but because of his superior qualities. After his trials he emerged as a real ruler of men.

The story is full of poignant incidents. There are also many situations full of profound human interest. With much imagination the poet has developed these situations, sounded them to their depths and brought out their entire emotional content. All the leading emotions, tender love (*srīṅgāra*), heroism (*vīra*), pity (*karuṇa*), humour (*hāsyā*), empathy (*adbhuta*), anger (*raudra*), fright (*bhayānaka*), disgust (*bhībhatsa*) and quietude (*sānta*) find full play in the appropriate contexts. While developing them he never allows them to get out of hand. The poet shows consummate skill in presenting them in a disciplined form. He who reads the Ramayana or listens to its exposition undergoes a silent change, especially in regard to his emotional life. He learns not only to keep his emotions under restraint but also to purify them. Such transformation of the affective aspect of the mind answers to what Aristotle calls the 'cathartic' effect of tragedy. The purging of the feelings and emotions takes place in a most unobtrusive manner. All great works of art share this quality of chastening the minds of the readers. Srimad Valmiki Ramayana is second to none in this respect. It has leavened the mind of a whole nation.

When the order of banishment was served on Rama, he was not perturbed in the least. He took it with his usual equanimity. He was not inclined to blame either Kaikeyi or his father. He had the rare insight to see the hidden hand of God in the affairs of men. He realized that Kaikeyi was just an instrument in the carrying out of a cosmic purpose. He did not ascribe it simply to her vicious nature. She was uniformly kind and affectionate towards him. In fact, she made no difference between her own son and Rama. If such a noble lady should take up such an obstruational attitude towards his proposed installation, Rama was certain that it must be due to divine intervention. He firmly believed that there is a divinity which shapes our ends and could therefore reconcile himself to the sudden turn in the course of events. A lesser man might have broken down. A greater revolution can hardly be thought of in the fortunes of a man. He who expected to be called to the post of heir-apparent the very next day found himself taking to the forest for a period of fourteen years. Nothing short of an unshakable faith in the dispensations of Providence could have helped him to take the change without a murmur of complaint.

Rama invariably accepted the divine dispensation of events. Whether they related to the life of an individual or a community. Few of us have this firm serenity. We generally ignore the divine will which the author of the Gita speaks of as the fifth and deciding factor (*daivam*) in drawing up our own plans. No wonder they suffer shipwreck. Events shape themselves in a manner contrary to what we had willed. Rama is never tired of discoursing on the ways of this mysterious Providence.

This is another lesson that the Ramayana has taught us. Expressions such as "*Ishvara Samkalpa*", "*Ishvarayatta*", "*Ishvarecha*"

and "*Ishvaranugraha*" are frequently on our lips. They point to an inner belief that our affairs are not really in our hands but that God also has the shaping hand in them. Gandhiji used to say frequently that he was entirely in the hands of God and was content to be directed by Him. This direction came to him through his "inner voice" which he considered infallible.

The lesson arising from Rama's victory over the powerful and lawless Ravana is not lost on the mind of the average Indian. Rama fought against heavy odds. All the advantages were on the side of Ravana and yet the latter suffered a most humiliating defeat. What was the secret of Rama's success? It was his firm faith in dharma that crowned his arms with success. Though Ravana had obtained practical immunity from death through his severe tapas, still he was foiled. He employed right means (*tapas*) for wrong ends, harassing other people. This is as bad as employing wrong means for gaining right ends. In Rama's opinion the means that we employ and the end that we hope to achieve through them must both be above reproach. On an important occasion he told Lakshmana that he would not use questionable means even to attain the position of Indra.

We may add in conclusion that in many other ways also *Srimad Ramayana* has influenced our ways of thinking and acting. They are too numerous to mention. It is enough if we add that *Ramanama* has gained the status of a mantra in this country. Gandhiji used to say that it gave him all the strength that he needed in carrying on his many campaigns. The Upanishad speaks of *Ramanama* as the Taraka Mantra. Its devout recitation can carry a man across the ocean of *samsara* and confer absolute liberation from the fetters of empirical life. Such is the powerful hold of *Srimad Ramayana* on the imagination of the Indian people.

Only when men shall roll up the sky like a skin, will there be an end of misery for them without realizing God.

— *Svetasvatatropanishad*.

THE TEACHING OF DHARMA IN THE MAHABHARATA

By
KAMALA SUBRAMANIAM

THE Ashrama of Bhagavan Veda Vyasa was built on the banks of the river Sarasvathi. Alone sat the rishi absorbed in meditation. Dwapara, the third quarter of Time, had come to an end and Kali had set in ; Kali which was laden with sin. Vyasa's mind was full of sadness. He saw in his mind's eye the dearth of Dharma in the days to come. He knew that during Kali men would have no thought of the next world. They would have no desire to perform Tapas nor would they have any desire to walk in the path of Dharma. The age of materialism had set in. The study of the scriptures would not find a place in the daily routine of man in Kali yuga.

Vyasa told himself that he would simplify the difficult path of Dharma. He edited the Vedas and divided them into four so that men could assimilate them more easily. Each section was taught to one of his disciples and they, in their turn, had been commanded to propagate them to the world of men.

Vyasa pondered again and he felt that he had not done enough. The Vedas and the Vedangas were not accessible to everyone. There were, again, the people who had been forbidden from studying the Vedas. He wished to indicate the path of Dharma to every human being. What could he do about it? Then came the great idea to him.

Vyasa had seen the great war fought on the field of Kurukshetra. The participants were all his kinsmen : they were his grandchildren. Protected by his armour of detachment he stood apart and watched the boiling cauldron of war wherein was poured the bluest blood of Bharatavarsha as a libation. All because of the adharma of his son Dhritarashtra who was affected by a peculiar type of inner blindness which would not



let him see what was good for him and for the entire world. A little seed of avarice, a small heart wherein it was planted, a few drops of envy to nurture it and the tree had grown to such an enormous size that nothing could be done about it. That was the tragedy underlying the great war.

Vyasa had tried many a time to tell him about the impending tragedy but it was of no avail. The great rishi said : "Thousands of mothers and fathers, hundreds of sons and wives who have been lived with, in the

recurring life of reincarnation, are going : and others will go alike hereafter. Day after day, thousands of sources of joy and hundreds of sources of fear overtake the foolish man but not the wise man. With uplifted arms I proclaim—and nobody listens to me—that wealth and enjoyment are derived from Dharma. Why is it then, that it is not followed ? Never should one, out of desire for enjoyment or out of covetousness, give up Dharma : not even for the sake of one's life. Dharma is eternal, but the reason for its being thus, in the embodied condition, is transient". Again and again Vyasa tried to reiterate the fact that Dharma was the only permanent thing in the world of men. But he was not heard.

Now when he looked back on the tragedy from a distance of time, Vyasa told himself : "It is but right that men in aftertimes should learn the lesson. I must relate to them the story of the feud between the sons of Dhritarashtra and the sons of Pandu : the war between right and wrong ; the conflict between Dharma and adharma. When they listen to it, men will know that Dharma is the ultimate victory : that this entire world revolves round the pivot called Dharma. I can thus help mankind to walk in the path of righteousness."

He then set about composing the story of the House of Kurus. His task was not easy. He had to be ruthlessly honest when he spoke about the sinfulness of the old blind king Dhritarashtra. Every event had to be related faithfully. His aim was to instil the lesson of Dharma in the heart of the listener. How was he to accomplish it ? A long dissertation on Dharma would not serve and so he adopted a very effective method. The story is related in a simple and powerful style. The entire narration is dramatic. The epic abounds in word pictures which stay for ever in the mind of the listener. But, woven along with the fabric of the main story is a subtle thread of gold which comprises the teachings of Dharma. This thread gleams suddenly against the background of the fabric. After lighting up the pages for a while, it is apparently lost. If, however,

one looks for it the gold is picked up again in some other spot and the same thought is continued as though there were no interruption. There are many such spots in the epic. But five of them can be considered to be gems. There is first the conversation between Nahusha and Yudhishtira set in the Vana-parva. This parva, incidentally, abounds in dissertations on dharma when the exiled prince Yudhishtira holds conversation with the many rishis who came to visit him.

The second, also a conversation, is that between Yudhishtira and the Lord of Dharma. This is right at the end of the Vana Parva and it is well known by the name of Yaksha Prasna.*

The third is the incomparable Vaidurikam, the conversation between Vidura and Dhritarashtra, which occurs in the Udyoga parva. This is followed by the Sanat Sujata parva which is the forerunner of the great Bhagavad Gita which is set in the Bheeshma parva. The last, the fifth, occurs in the Shanthi Parva. In fact, the entire parva is devoted to the subject nearest to the heart of Vyasa, Dharma.

Now all these have a common feature apart from the subject. They are all in the form of question and answer. This is in keeping with the style of the Upanishads where the teacher and student sit together and discuss Brahma Vidya.

Vaidurikam, incidentally, better known as Vidura Neethi, has not enjoyed the popularity of the Yaksha Prasna or the Bhagavad Gita. Perhaps because the beginning is very innocuous and one is tempted to skip the pages. But it is a very beautiful portion of the epic and deserves serious study. Here is set forth, in very easy and simple steps, the lesson of Dharma which can be practised by all.

It is the middle of the night. Summoned by the king, Vidura hurries to the royal apartments. He sees the old man sitting all by himself. "Vidura", says the king in a piteous voice. "Sanjaya has just gone after

* A portion of it is translated in this issue.
— Editor.

censuring me for my conduct. He will speak about his journey to Upaplavya tomorrow in the assembly hall. I am so worried about the future of my sons that I am not able to sleep. Tell me what is good for a sleepless man like me. Comfort me, Vidura".

Vidura's talk begins in a sarcastic vein. He says: "Only a thief is afflicted by this malady: so is a lustful person. It goes without saying that a man who has lost all his wealth and a man who has not been able to succeed in life keep them company. Neither can the man sleep who is attacked by a stronger man. Do you, my lord, grieve because you covet the wealth of others?"

Dhritarashtra is familiar with the bitter and acid tongue of his brother. He knows that all the descriptions fit him as Vidura meant them to. But he is too far gone in his despair to resent the words of Vidura. He implores his brother to talk to him 'words of wisdom'. We then hear the beautiful dissertation of Vidura on Dharma. All the codes of behaviour are dealt with systematically.

Vidura's method of approach is delightful. He begins with generalities and then he goes on to emphasise the importance of behaviour: about what should be done by a man if he is to be considered a well behaved person. Here is an example. "A man should be able to discriminate between the Two by means of the One. He should be able to bring under his control the Three with the help of the Four. He must be able to vanquish the Five. He should know the Six and beware of the Seven. This is the path to happiness!" Cryptic statements like this are quite common in the epic. By One is meant the intellect and by Two, right and wrong. Three stands for friend, stranger and foe; while Four is meant to represent conciliation, gift, disunion and severity. Five stands for the senses and Six signifies treaty, war, etc., the essentials of a kshatriya. Seven enumerates the seven temptations in the path of a king: women, dice, hunting, harshness of speech, drinking severity of punishment and waste of wealth.

Vidura tries to make his lesson as attractive as possible. He makes out a list of the qualities a man must have and those he has

to avoid: and he arranges them in a very attractive, catchy manner. He uses the numbers one to ten and in the series is threaded the list of qualities.

Righteousness is the one highest good; forgiveness the one supreme peace; knowledge the one supreme contentment, and benevolence the one sole happiness. We then come to two. A number of things are enumerated in twos: for example, a man may attain renown by two things: refraining from harsh speech and disregarding those that are wicked. Then follow the series of qualities taken three at a time: lust, anger and covetousness are destructive to one's self and are the gates to hell. A learned king, says Vidura, should not confer with these four: men of small sense, men of procrastination, men that are indolent and men that are flatterers. In other words he describes the court of the Kauravas and the sycophants of Duryodhana in particular. Talking about the five, he says: "Of the five senses belonging to man, if one springs a leak, from that one leak runs out all the intelligence of man like water running out of a perforated leathern vessel." One who masters the six, namely lust, anger, grief, confusion of the intellect, pride and vanity, will naturally become master of the senses and will never commit sin. Six faults should be avoided by a man who desires prosperity: sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, indolence and procrastination. A king should renounce the seven: viz., women, wine, etc. Eight qualities glorify a man: wisdom, high birth, self restraint, prowess, moderation in speech, gift according to one's power and gratitude. This house has nine doors, three pillars and five witnesses and it is presided over by the soul. These ten do not know what virtue is: the intoxicated, the inattentive, the raving, the fatigued, the angry, the starving, the hasty, the covetous, the frightened and the lustful. Summing up, Vidura says: "That man who does not grieve when calamity has already come upon him; who exerts himself with all his senses controlled, and who bears his misery in season is the foremost of men and all his foes are vanquished." Incidentally he was describing Yudhishtira and the king knew it.

Vidura keeps on talking and the king continues to listen. The one fails to make any impression and the other is none the wiser for all the talk since he has insulated himself from all that is good for him. Vidura speaks on behaviour and then about conduct which goes deeper into the texture of the mind, the heart and the power of thinking. "Intoxication with wealth" says Vidura, "is much worse than wine since a man drunk with power of wealth can never be brought to his senses unless he has a fall. Like the moon during the bright fortnight calamities increase in respect of him who is under the tyranny of the five senses."

Then comes the lovely, time-honoured imagery from the beautiful Kathopanishad : "One's body, O king, is one's car : the soul within is the driver : and the senses are its steeds. Drawn by these excellent steeds when well trained, the wise man proceeds to perform the journey of life pleasantly, awake and in peace. The horses that are unbroken and incapable of being controlled, always lead the unskilled driver to destruction in the course of the journey : so one's senses unsubdued lead only to destruction."

Again and again Vidura speaks in praise of soft words. "Avoid harsh words and speech. To control speech is said to be the most difficult. A heart wounded and pierced by harsh words will never recover. Weapons like arrows and darts which wound the body can be extricated but a dagger of words plunged into the heart can never be taken out."

"He to whom the gods have ordained defeat has his senses taken away from him and it is because of this that he stoops to ignoble deeds. When the intellect becomes

dim and destruction is near, then wrong, looking like right, firmly strikes the heart."

And so it goes on, to Vidura's sorrow, fruitlessly. After listening to the wise words of Vidura the old king can only say : "Man is not the dispenser of either his prosperity or his adversity. He is like a wooden doll moved by strings. Indeed, the Creator has made man the victim of Destiny."

To a man who refuses to take good advice, words, though fraught with meaning and wisdom, have no meaning at all. Vidura sums up his talk with a realistic picture of the futility of man's life on earth. "I would impart to thee another sacred lesson productive of good fruits and which is the highest of all teachings. Virtue should never be forsaken out of desire, fear or temptation, nay, not for the sake of life itself : virtue is everlasting : pleasure and pain are transcient. Life indeed, is everlasting, but its phases are transitory. Forsaking those which are passing, take to thyself what is everlasting and let contentment be yours, since contentment is the highest of all attainments."

"Behold ! Illustrious and mighty kings, having ruled the earth abounding in corn and wealth, have become victims of the Universal Destroyer leaving behind their kingdoms and vast resources of enjoyments. When a man dies, only two go with him to the other world, his merits and his sins. Only these two keeps him company. Therefore should man, carefully and gradually, earn the merit of righteousness."

And Dhritarashtra's reply is : "No creature is able to transgress Destiny. Destiny is, I think, certain to take its course. Individual exertion is futile".

God, who is one only, is hidden in all beings. He is all-pervading, and is the inner self of all creatures. He presides over all actions, and all beings reside in Him. He is the witness, and He is the Pure Consciousness free from the three Gunas of Nature.

— *Svetasvataraopanishad*.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GITA

By
BHAGAVAN DAS

WHEN there is such a wealth and variety of Hindu scriptures why is it that the Bhagavad Gita is by far the best loved and most widely read both in India and abroad? It has become the regular thing for religious and intellectual leaders in India to write commentaries on it, and its translations are innumerable, while other sacred texts lie more or less neglected.

Perhaps it is because it has a peculiar quality of universality. Sri Krishna, who proclaimed it, is the most universal of the Avatars. The teaching covers all four of the traditional paths to beatitude, those of knowledge, of devotion, of action and of yoga. Also, Arjuna to whom it was taught, was a very ordinary, representative aspirant. The Yoga Vasishta, in contrast, is teaching given to Rama, a youth of rare intelligence and sensitivity, who, while still in his teens, had perceived the unsatisfactory and illusory nature of the phenomenal world. Unlike him, Arjuna was a middle-aged married man who had lived an active life and enjoyed it but now found himself faced with a particularly distasteful task. Far more readers will be able to imagine themselves in his place or share his difficulties and problems.

He has reached the point where he wonders whether the game is worth the candle. Should he carry on with his struggle for victory, wealth and power (involving defeat and loss for others) or should he renounce it all and lead a life of meditation and poverty. Neither, Krishna tells him. He is to carry on and face his destiny because it is his, not for the sake of victory but as a duty. "Better one's own dharma, though *vigunah* (lowly or unsuccessful) than that of another though well performed. One incurs no sin in following the line of action true to one's nature."¹ And doing so was to be his form of sadhana or spiritual train-

ing. In parenthesis, Ramana Maharshi used to give the same instruction to people who would ask his authorisation to renounce their family and occupations and become sadhus.

Krishna does indeed teach Arjuna the true and ultimate doctrine of Advaita; in fact he begins by doing so in the first part of Chapter II, culminating in the stupendously simple verse: "There is no existence of the unreal and no non-existence of the Real."² But having done so he says: "This is the theory; now listen to what you have got to do about it."³ And in laying down what is to be done he does not burden Arjuna with a whole network of commands and prohibitions but points direct to the heart of the matter, the spirit in which or motive for which he is to act. "Your concern is only with your duty, never with the gain from action, but don't cling to inaction either."⁴

In the immediate context a cousin was trying to usurp the throne of Arjuna's brother, but the point was that, whether it concerned him personally or not, he was to resist evil because it was evil. Right is to be upheld because it is right and wrong resisted because it is wrong, regardless of whether one's own interests will be furthered or impaired by doing so.

This might seem rather a cold incentive to right living, but, as though to balance it, the Gita constantly prescribes devotion. "Those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single-minded devotion, their minds fixed on Me, I speedily save from the ocean of samsara."⁵ And

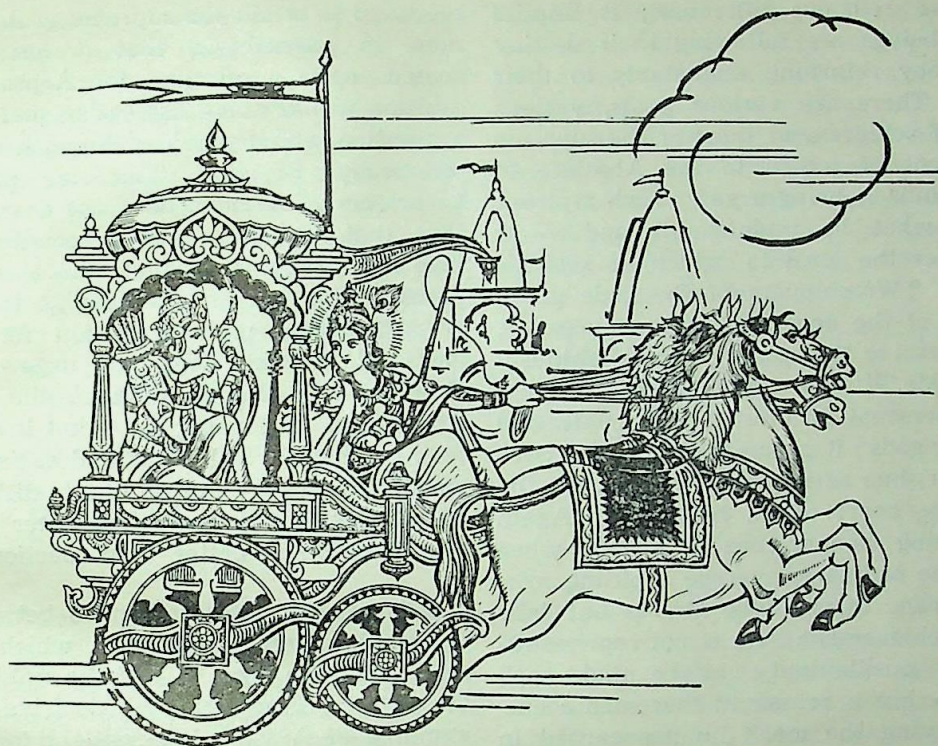
¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII, 47.

² *ibid.*, II, 16.

³ *ibid.*, II, 39.

⁴ *ibid.*, II, 47.

⁵ *ibid.*, XII, 6-7.



then, as so often happens in the Gita, a concession is made for those who find it too hard: "If you cannot even practise constant dedication, at least concentrate on performing actions for My sake. Even by that you will attain the Goal."⁶ And for those who find even this too strenuous there still remains disinterested activity. "If you can't even do this, then, taking refuge in Me, perform all actions with self-control, not for the sake of the benefits they may bring."⁷

However, the great consideration for the seeker that is shown in the Gita does not mean that he is encouraged, in modern parlance, to settle for some lesser goal than the ultimate. Nothing of the sort. A part of the Vedas known as the 'Karma Kanda' is concerned partly with ritualistic activity aiming at a formal paradise in which merit is rewarded but from which there is return again to samsara in a new life on earth after the merit is exhausted. "Those who know the three Vedas, drinking soma and purified from sin, worship me with sacrifices and pray for the attainment of heaven. On

coming to the holy world of the Lord of Gods, they enjoy in paradise the celestial pleasures of the Gods. But having enjoyed the vast realm of heaven, they return on the exhaustion of their merit to the world of mortals. Following the dharma of the three Vedas, they entertain desires and are subject to going and returning. (i.e. to death and rebirth)."⁸ Arjuna is warned against being content with this. "The Vedas speak of the three gunas, but you should rise above the gunas and also above the pairs of opposites, free from getting and keeping, established in the transcendental state of the Self."⁹

Even though the aspirant, in the person of Arjuna, is constantly urged to aim at the highest, there is benevolent tolerance of those who aim lower. "By whatever way men approach Me, by that way do I come to them. All paths that men follow lead to Me."¹⁰ The meaning goes much deeper

⁶ *ibid.*, XII, 10.

⁷ *ibid.*, XII, 11.

⁸ *ibid.*, IX, 20-21.

⁹ *ibid.*, II, 45.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, IV, 11.

than mere religious tolerance ; it implies that all beings are following their destiny and thereby returning ineluctably to their Source. There are various goals, various degrees of achievement short of the supreme achievement of return to the Absolute to which Arjuna is being urged. Each aspirant achieves what he understands and works for, reaches the goal to which he sets his compass. "Worshippers of the gods go to the gods, of the ancestors to the ancestors, of the spirits to the spirits ; My worshippers come to Me."¹¹ The 'Me' here does not mean a personal or limited God contrasted with other gods ; it means the Universal Self. In fact, Krishna says explicitly : "I am the Self in the heart of all beings."¹² Again this amazing benevolence is shown when Arjuna, the ordinary, average aspirant, asks what happens to one who strives but falls short of achievement. He is not reprimanded for his pusillanimity, as he might well have been, but is reassured that such a one, after enjoying the merit he has earned in heaven, is born again in a pure or noble family where he regains the understanding he had acquired in his previous life and is carried on further, even involuntarily, by the current of his former striving."¹³

Supreme Advaitic knowledge is constantly implied, sometimes openly expressed, in the Gita, nowhere more trenchantly than in the verse already quoted, that there is no being of the unreal and no not-being of the Real.² Also it has the highest praise for knowledge: "There is nothing in the world so purifying as Knowledge."¹⁴ Nevertheless, it is not an Advaitic scripture, as the Yoga Vasishtha is, or the Ashtavakra Gita. It does not primarily expound the path of Knowledge. When, in Chapter II, Sri Krishna first expounds Advaita and then tells Arjuna to follow in practice the path of disinterested activity, that is enough to confuse the military type, 'the plain blunt man' that Arjuna is, and he starts Chapter III by complaining: "If you think that Knowledge is better than action, why do you urge me to this dreadful action? You have got me all confused with this double talk of yours. Please tell me which is the one way for

me to go to attain the supreme goal."¹⁵ And note, in parenthesis, that it has already ceased to be a question for Arjuna which decision would make life easier, and become a question which provides the path (characteristically, he says, "the one path" to Liberation). Krishna does not answer. He says that the path varies according to a man's temperament, that there are two paths: "the path of Knowledge for introverts and the path of action for extroverts."¹⁶ but he does not urge him, as Vasishtha does Rama, to take the path of Knowledge by turning the mind inwards to seek the Reality in himself and asking 'Who am I?'. Instead he urges him to disinterested activity, and a few verses later he adds that "Action is better than inaction."¹⁷

It is necessary to distinguish between the doctrinal understanding from which a man starts and the type of path he follows. For the path of Knowledge, full doctrinal understanding of Advaita is essential ; for a path of karma or bhakti, less complete understanding could serve. The Bhagavad Gita gives full doctrinal understanding (once more a sign of its benevolence, giving even more than is necessary) ; but the path it lays down is a combination of karma and bhakti, action and devotion.

All selfish action is postulating the reality of the ego, the individual self, in fact, even though one may deny it in theory, and therefore Arjuna is constantly exhorted to avoid this. There is a modern ideal of altruistic activity, but that is far from being a reliable means of purification, since it can imply setting oneself up as a sort of providence for others. It is not that that Arjuna is taught but disinterested activity, a far purer discipline: doing one's duty because it is one's duty, with no thought for gain or loss. And it is not with Self-enquiry but with devotion that this has to be combined.

¹¹ *ibid.*, IX, 25.

¹² *ibid.*, X, 20.

¹³ *ibid.*, VI, 37-44.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, IV, 38.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, III, 1-2.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, III, 3.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, III, 8.

I have already referred to a passage where action rather than inaction is prescribed, that is karma marga rather than jnana marga; in Chapter XII it is bhakti marga and jnana marga that are contrasted, and again it is jnana marga that is disfavoured. Arjuna asks: "Which are more skilled in yoga, those devotees who ever steadfastly worship You or those who seek the Imperishable Unmanifest?" And the answer is: "I consider those more perfect in yoga who, with mind fixed on Me, ever worship Me steadfastly, endowed with

Supreme Faith." There is no discussion of theory, no question of one being right and the other wrong. Of those who seek the Impersonal Absolute, Krishna says that they too come to Him;¹⁸ only he tells Arjuna that it is a more difficult path: "The difficulty facing those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest is greater, because the goal of the Unmanifest is very hard for embodied beings to attain."¹⁹

¹⁸ *ibid.*, XII, 4.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, XII, 5.

THE RIBHU GITA

By T. K. S.

RIBHU was a great Rishi. His name finds mention in a few Upanishads like the Thejobindu Upanishad, Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad and Varahopanisad. He is reported to have obtained Brahma Vidya directly from Parameshwara and taught it later to several disciples, e.g. Nidagha, the sage. Ribhu's teachings to Nidagha are contained in the Ribhu Gita, which forms a section of Siva Rahasya. To the best of our knowledge, this Section of Siva Rahasya in Sanskrit is not in print. We have a Tamil rendering of the same by Lokanatha Swamigal alias Bhikshu Sastrigal. This version in simple, understandable Tamil poetry was often read in the presence of Bhagavan and Tenamma Patti's recitals of the same were soul-inspiring. Ribhu Gita finds mention in all works relating to Bhagavan because Bhagavan used to refer to the work or quote from it often.

Long after Nidagha was taught by Ribhu, the latter desired to know how his old disciple was faring. So he went to the place of Nidagha disguised as an ignorant villager, and saw him watching a procession there. It was the occasion of the king of the place going in procession on an elephant on some important occasion. The disguised master asked Nidagha what it all was. Nidagha said that the king was upon the elephant

and going in procession. Ribhu asked Nidagha which was the elephant and which the king. Nidagha replied that the one 'above' was the king and the one 'below' was the elephant. Ribhu said that he could not understand the terms 'above' and 'below'. Nidagha pitied the seeming ignorance of the 'villager' and began demonstrating the terms 'above' and 'below'. He got upon his back and said, "Now you can understand, I am 'up' and you are 'down'". The seeming ignorant man said, "Ah, now I understand, 'above' and 'below'; but not what you said as 'I' and 'you'". This answer of the disguised ignorant man created an awakening in Nidagha. He thought "surely, this must be a strange man. No one but my master can discuss such terms as 'I' and 'you'". So he jumped down and looked searchingly at the disguised man and found that he was none else than his Guru, Ribhu. He fell prostrate at his feet and went into ecstasies at the benign Grace of his Master who had come in search of him.

For lack of translations of the Ribhu Gita in English, enquirers have been referred to the Upanishads, as Sri Bhagavan said that the words of Ribhu Gita tally word for word with the above said Upanishads.

THE YAKSHA PRASNA

From THE MAHABHARATA (contd)

This dialogue in which a yaksha, who turns up to be the god Dharma, questions Yudhishtira, mostly on points of Dharma, is continued from our previous issue. The notes are based largely on those of K. Balasubramania Iyer in his translation published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Yaksha

Yudhishtira

17. What *sama* (Vedic chant) is it that is appropriate for a yajna (ritualistic sacrifice) ?

18. What *yajus* (Vedic text) is appropriate for a yajna ?

19. What is it that chooses the yajna ?

20. What is it that the yajna cannot dispense with ?

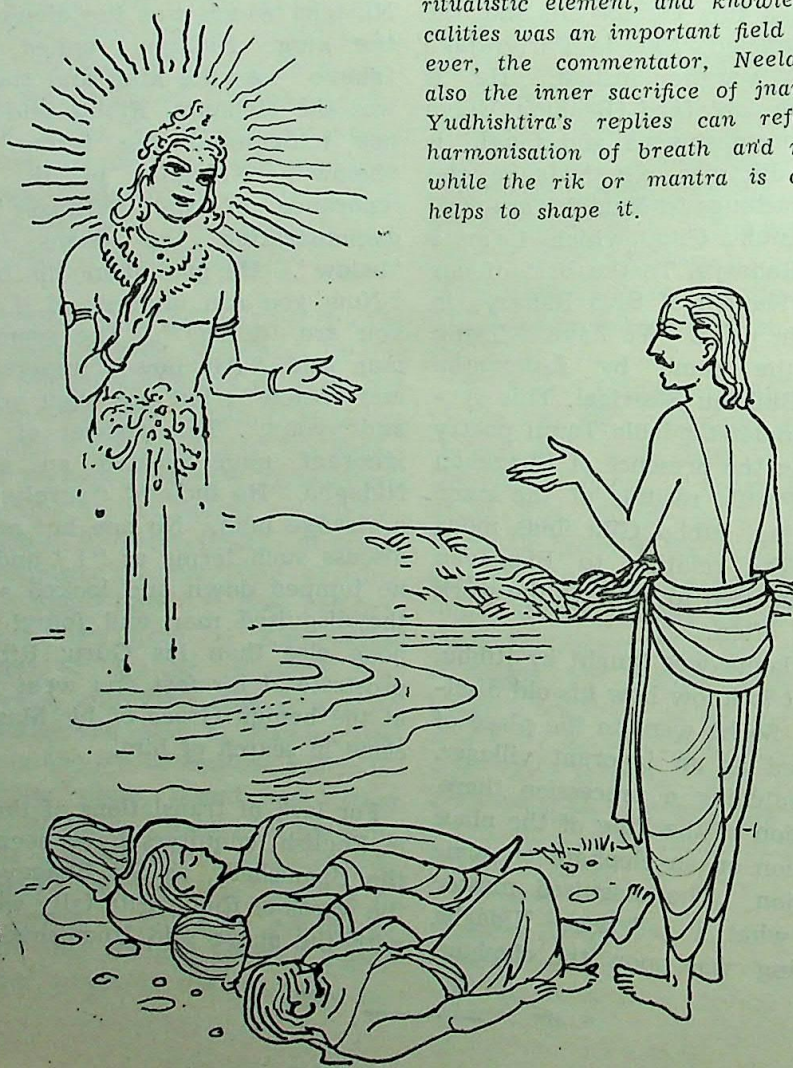
17. Prana is the most appropriate *sama* for a yajna.

18. Mind (*manas*) is the most appropriate *yajus* for a yajna.

19. It is the *rik* which chooses the yajna.

20. It is the *rik* which the yajna cannot dispense with.

Vedic religion contained also an important ritualistic element, and knowledge of its technicalities was an important field of culture. However, the commentator, Neelakantha, mentions also the inner sacrifice of *jnana-yoga*, to which Yudhishtira's replies can refer. For this the harmonisation of breath and mind is necessary while the *rik* or *mantra* is essential to it and helps to shape it.



Yaksha

21. What is the best of things that fall ?
22. What is the best of things that are buried ?
23. What is the best of quadrupeds ?
24. What is the best of those born ?

Yudhishtira

21. Rain is the best of things that fall.
22. Seed is the best of things buried.
23. The cow is the best of quadrupeds.
24. A son is the best of those born.

Yaksha

25. What man can be said not really to live although he enjoys sense objects, has a mind, is respected by society, breathes and is accepted by all ?

Yudhishtira

25. One who does not make the prescribed offerings to the gods, guests, dependants, the ancestors and the Self, though breathing, does not live.

Yudhishtira rightly takes this question as referring to the householder who neglects the traditional Panchamahayajnas (five great obligations or sacrifices) enjoined in the Smritis as obligatory for a householder.

Yaksha

26. What is weightier than the earth ?
27. What is loftier than the sky ?
28. What is faster than the wind ?
29. What is more numerous than blades of grass ?

Yudhishtira

26. The mother is weightier than the earth.
27. The father is loftier than the sky.
28. The mind is faster than the wind.
29. Thoughts are more numerous than blades of grass.

*Weightier as a basis for sustaining one's life.
Loftier as meriting respect.*

Yaksha

30. What sleeps with its eyes open ?
31. What does not move after birth ?
32. What is without heart ?
33. What expands by its own force ?

Yudhishtira

30. A fish sleeps with its eyes open.
31. An egg does not move after birth.
32. A stone is without heart.
33. A river expands by its own force.

Questions of this type are apparently meaningless, like a modern 'intelligence test'. In fact, however, they contain references to the scriptures or traditional parallels which Yudhishtira is able to take up.

For instance, the Purusha (spirit) moving from the waking state to the dream state and from that to dreamless sleep is compared to a fish. The body and its faculties and their stimulating impulses are the not-self. The Self retains awareness (open eyes) in whichever of the three states they are in.

The next answer implies that the Self is in the unenlightened individual but encased in nescience like the chick in its shell.

'Ashma', the word for stone, means etymologically 'without body'. It is the dark counterpart of the bodiless state.

The 'nadi' in the fourth question refers not only to a physical river but to the flow of consciousness.

Yaksha

34. Who is the traveller's friend ?
35. Who is the home-dweller's friend ?
36. Who is the sick man's friend ?
37. Who is the friend of the dying ?

Yudhishtira

34. A company is the traveller's friend.
35. His wife is the home-dweller's friend.
36. The doctor is the friend of the sick.
37. Gifts (made by him) are the friend of the dying.

Gifts made in life are said in the sastras to tide a man over his death. At least when dying a man should make gifts.

(This dialogue will be continued in our next issue).

THE THREEFOLD SCRIPTURE

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

THERE are various ways of categorising the Hindu scriptures. In the first place, they are divided into sruti, that is 'heard' or 'revealed' scripture, and smriti, that is 'recollected' scripture; the sruti being of absolute and the smriti only of contingent validity. This does not necessarily mean that the smriti are less true; it may mean that they are less widely applicable owing to their larger admixture of the contingent. The sruti comprise the Vedas including the Upanishads. Their pre-eminence is not due to a high or higher degree of philosophical exposition. In fact, except for the Upanishads, they contain little of this. It is due to the power in them, a power that goes beyond theories and philosophies to the basic source of Power in the monosyllable OM, which the Vedic Rishis grasped and canalized.

A second category arises from the fact that the words of a Jivan Mukta, one Liberated while living, are beyond scripture, beyond everything. They do not abide our question. They are simply to be accepted. The Maharshi himself indicated this on one occasion when he said: "The shastras are the outcome of the sayings and doings of Jnanis and have come down through the ages through many channels. If there is any divergence between what a Jnani says or does and what is laid down in the shastras, then the latter have to be revised or corrected." Such are the enunciations of a Yoga Vasishta or a Ramana Maharshi.

The third category is the 'Prastana Trayi' or 'Threefold Scripture' of Hinduism. It has sometimes been said that any doctrine can find a place in Hinduism. That is, of course, absurd. Many varied modes of perceiving truth are possible, but so also are many types of error. The three scriptures are accepted as fundamental to Hindu

orthodoxy; what accords with them is valid; if anything does not accord with them it is not valid. Only one of the 'Three Scriptures' is technically sruti: that is the Upanishads. The second is the Bhagavad Gita and is intrinsically compelling, being the scripture of Sri Krishna himself.

The third is the Brahma Sutras. These are traditionally regarded as the work of Veda Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas and author of the Mahabharata. What is more important than authorship is that from ancient times they have been universally accepted as the touchstone of Hindu orthodoxy, the enunciation of the Sanatana Dharma. They are, as the title indicates, of the sutra form of literature, that is a collection of terse cryptic statements, leaving all but the essential to be understood or filled in by commentators. All three of the great Hindu Acharyas — Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa — have in fact written commentaries on them, each in terms of his own school. They themselves, moreover, contain a good deal of matter which can be considered controversial, particularly in refutation of unorthodox schools. Other names that have been given to them are 'Vedanta Sutras', 'Vyasa Sutras', 'Uttara Mimamsa Sutras' and 'Sariraka Mimamsa Sutras'.

All three of the 'Three Scriptures' — Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutras — are regarded as authoritative. They are found to be in agreement, and the true orthodox teaching of Sanatana Dharma is contained in them all. The difference is rather in tone and manner of exposition; while the Gita is vibrant with love and the Upanishads maintain sublime wisdom, the Sutras are more like categorical guide-lines. No one who aspires to say what the Sanatana Dharma teaches and what it does not can afford to neglect them.

One cannot speak of an outline of what is itself an outline, but the following sets forth some of the essential points contained in the *Brahma Sutras* and accepted traditionally as authoritative. In cases where there may seem to be contradiction it means that both aspects of a paradox have to be accepted.

Brahman is One without a second, can be described only as 'Not this, Not that', is the cause of all, is Bliss and is the Inner Ruler.

Brahman is the material cause and the efficient cause and is an intelligent principle.

Individual self (*jiva*) and Universal Self (*Paramatma*) are in the heart.

Brahman is not the object of perception. The Self consisting of Knowledge is not the individual self but Brahman.

He who is the creator of the sun, moon, etc., is not *prana* or *jiva* but Brahman.

Brahman, though different from the world, can be its cause, and yet the effect is not different from the cause.

Brahman is uncreated, indivisible and omnipotent.

No motive can be attributed to Brahman's creation and no evil ascribed to Him. The only thing that could be represented as 'motive' is 'leela' or 'play', which is spontaneous.

Mind, intellect and the sense organs are created, not original.¹

The development of names and forms is the work of the Lord, not of the *jiva*, but the *jiva* is eternal (except insofar as transcended through Knowledge in *Moksha*).

The *jiva* is the agent so long as he is connected with the *upadhis* (physical and subtle bodies) and is dependent on the Lord for his activity. He is a reflection of Brahman.

The *jiva* or individual being experiences other lives after death. (Its possible developments are described. Possible modes of death and rebirth are described.)

Liberation is of one kind only.

But a *Jivan Mukta* may take birth again for the fulfilment of some mission.²

Meditation on the *Atma* is to be continued until Realization is attained.

While meditating on Brahman one should regard It as identical with oneself.

Knowledge of Brahman frees one from the effects of all past *karmas*, from (apparent) good and evil alike. Nevertheless *prarabdha-karma* (that part of one's *karma* which is due to be worked out in this lifetime) continues (from the point of view of the observer) until exhausted, when the knower of Brahman becomes (consciously) One with It.

The Liberated Being does not thereby acquire anything new but only realizes his already existent nature.

The Knower of Brahman has all powers except that of creation; he does not return to manifestation.

¹cf. the *Bhagavad Gita*, Ch. IX., where Sri Krishna speaks of them as the creation of his *Prakriti*.

²*Bhagavan* Ramana Maharshi has also been heard to declare this.

In the state of ignorance there is apparent duality in Brahman, then one smells the other, one sees the other, one hears the other, one speaks to the other, one thinks something, one knows something. But to the knower of Brahman all name and form become merged in the Self. In the state of self-knowledge what object one should smell and through what instrument? What should one see and through what? What should one hear and through what? What should one think and through what? What should one know and through what organ? Through what instrument should one know That by which all this is known? Through what, O, *Maitreyi*, one should know the knower?

— *Brihadaranyakopanishad*.

THE BHAGAVATA

Dr. W. RADHAKRISHNAYYA

Dr. Radhakrishnayya, whose article on 'The Intricacies of Karma' appeared in our issue of April 1967, has published a translation of extracts from the Bhagavata (entitled simply 'Sreemad Bhagavatam', obtainable from Sri Ramanashram, price Rs. 3, reviewed in our issue of January 1967). An outstanding feature of it is the profound insight with which he expounds the symbolism of some of the old myths and the legendary exploits of Krishna.

THE Bhagavata is a supreme example of that type of literature in which the ancient Hindus so excelled: a compilation of stories woven on to a thread of doctrinal exposition. Many of the stories are symbolical; the doctrine is purely spiritual.

The Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita are spoken of as the 'Prasthan Trayi' or 'Threefold Scripture' of Hinduism, but that is perhaps for the learned; for simple folk who like their doctrine humanised by myth and symbol it may be rather the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata. The Bhagavata is, moreover, regarded as the Bhashya or commentary on the Brahma Sutras, inasmuch as while they give the theory of Liberation the Bhagavata gives its case-history, so to speak. In the Bhagavata itself it is said to be "a Purana as sacred as the Vedas" (1-3-40), "great, most auspicious, beneficent and protective" (1-3-41), "the essence of all the Vedas and Puranas extracted, collected and extolled" (1-3-42). It is described as '*vedyam*' (understandable), '*veditavyam*' (worth understanding), '*sivadam*' (auspicious). It is said to eliminate rebirth and to remove the threefold suffering, mental, physical and phenomenal. It is declared that one who reads it has immediate direct experience of God in the heart.

The Bhagavata indicates its contents in a stanza (1-10-1) which divides up into

1. *sarga* : creation in principle.
2. *visarga* : detailed creation.
3. *sthanam* : the preservation of what is created.

4. *poshana* : protection of devotees.
5. *Ootayah* : *karma vasanas* — the continuous chain of causation operation through the law of karma.
6. *manvantara* : the course of human development from the time of Manu onwards.
7. *Isanukathanam* : Divine Incarnations and manifestations, stories of devotees.
8. *nirodha* : *yoganidra* ; subduing the mind through the elimination of thought.
9. *Mukti* : Liberation.
10. *Asraya* : the Reality which is the support or substratum of the universe with all its apparent modifications and changes.

The first nine of these are only manifestations of the tenth, which alone is real.

Some of this teaching is given directly, some through symbolical stories.

As for authorship, it is traditionally ascribed to the great Sage Veda Vyasa, who was the grandfather of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas in the Mahabharata. Previous to him, it is said, the Vedas had been handed down only by word of mouth from Guru to disciple, and it was he who gathered together the vast numbers of hymns and edited them into the four collections known as Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. Next he wrote or edited the Brahma Sutras, indications for direct realization of the Supreme. Since all this could help mainly the learned, he also composed

that vast epic the Mahabharata with its hundred thousand verses. Here, amid the turbulent and often poignant stories was interwoven every kind of knowledge man needed, so that it came to be known as the 'Fifth Veda'. In the very centre of it is enshrined the Bhagavad Gita.

Even after this stupendous achievement, Vyasa still did not feel at peace; he had not yet the feeling that his work in life was accomplished. On the contrary, he felt frustrated and dejected; that his life lacked fulfilment. At this juncture the Sage Narada (who so often appears as the Divine Messenger) met him and advised him as a remedy to write the Bhagavata extolling the greatness of God and of devotion to God and to the devotees of God. Although this gives the impression of the Bhagavata as a work of pure bhakti, it should be added that it is no less a work of pure jnana, pure advaita. For instance, opening at random, one comes upon a passage such as: "The body is perishable. The Self is eternal. He is ever unmodified, pure, Self-luminous. He is the Indweller, support and primary cause. He is all pervading, unattached and full (purna). He has no actions. He is One and has no birth or death. One must investigate and find out the Self in one's own heart."

Accordingly, Vyasa wrote the Bhagavata Purana and attained immense peace thereby feeling at last that his function in life had been accomplished.

The death of King Parikshit provides the framework for the Bhagavata. All five of the Pandava brothers survived the 18-day Battle of Kurukshetra at which the Kshatriya chivalry of India was decimated, but all their sons were treacherously slain. A few months later, however, a posthumous son was born of Arjuna's son Abhimanyu. He was born dead owing to the machinations of an enemy but was brought to life by Krishna. He was given the name of Parikshit. When he came of age the five brothers made him king and renounced the world, leaving on foot for the Himalayas.



Parikshit was a wise, upright and devout ruler and had a long and prosperous reign. Then one day, while out hunting, he got separated from his followers and arrived alone at a hermitage in the forest. Feeling thirsty and exhausted, he asked the Brahmin who was sitting there for a drink of water. The Brahmin, however, was in meditation and ignored him. Incensed by this, Parikshit picked up on the end of his bow a dead snake that he saw lying there and draped it round the hermit's shoulders like a garland. When the hermit's son returned and was told



The famous Rāsaleela

what had happened he cursed the king to die of snake-bite within a week.

Curses were taken very seriously in ancient times and were very effective. It never occurred to Parikshit to doubt that the curse would fructuate. Nor did he deny that he deserved it for his outburst of temper and the indignity inflicted on the sage. He therefore abdicated in favour of his son and went to spend his last seven days sitting on the banks of the Ganges, bringing his mind into a fit state for the great transition of death.

Vyasa had a son named Suka who, though young, was perfectly enlightened, completely free from the I-am-the-body illusion which still possessed Vyasa himself, despite his vast achievements. Suka wandered constantly, never staying even a day in one place, never begging, only accepting what was offered to him. Now, however, he came to stay with Parikshit during the last days of his life to prepare his mind for death. Other kings and sages gathered round to listen. Suka's stories and dissertations, which he had learned from his father, Veda Vyasa, comprise the Bhagavata. At the end of six days Parikshit was completely free from body-identification and Suka wandered away. Thereupon a serpent bit Parikshit and he died peacefully.

The Bhagavata is woven mainly around the Avatars or Divine Incarnations, of which it lists the principal ones as ten. Some Puranas bring the list up to over twenty including less important ones also. Krishna and his elder brother, Balaram, are sometimes listed together as the eighth. In one passage in the Bhagavata Balaram alone is spoken of as the Eighth Avatar on the ground that an Avatar is a manifestation of some aspect of God, whereas Krishna was universal, '*Bhagavan swayam*', 'God Himself'.

This Divine Purana consists of eighteen thousand verses divided into twelve sections or skandas. The first and last of them, like a framework, tell the tale of King Parikshit. The second to the ninth are composed of stories centred mainly around the Avatars. The tenth and longest, of nearly four thousand verses, is devoted to tales of Krishna—his birth, childhood, boyhood, youth, his many exploits, the great work of his prime. The eleventh is a doctrinal exposition which Krishna gave to his devotee Uddhava before leaving the body. "The wise seeker, whose intuition has led him to realization of the Self, does not indulge in theoretical argument about this world of diversity, knowing it to be a mere appearance in Me." It is a fitting companion piece

to that great exposition Sri Krishna gave to another disciple in the Bhagavad Gita.

Instruction is also given through stories. Here is one, greatly condensed. There were four child sages, sons of Brahma, who, in the form of five-year-old boys, used to roam about naked and wander in and out of heaven at will. The gate-keepers, Jaya and Vijaya, resented this and barred their entrance, for which the young sages cursed them to fall from heaven and be reborn as demons in three successive births. Jaya and Vijaya appeal to the Lord but he confirms the curse. He grants them, however, the boon that, even as demons, they will retain constant remembrance of him.

The child sages represent the inner faculty of consciousness which, being so proximate to the Self, slips in and out with childish familiarity. But the door-keepers, 'I' and 'Mine' bar the way and keep them out. This sets up a feeling of frustration and brings a curse on 'I' and 'Mine'. Innocent in their primordial state, they have to be renounced, that is slain, but are very tenacious of life and come to birth again and again, only now with animosity, that is as demons. First they are reborn as Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha in the stage of pure enmity of the ego to the Self and are slain by the Narasimha Avatar; then as Ravana and Kumbhakarna, distracted by the pleasures of sense, and are slain by Rama, and lastly as Sisupala and Dantavakra, enslaved to evil speech and evil action and are killed by Sri Krishna. Being slain, they finally merge into him, as the I-thought, when finally eradicated, is thereby perpetuated as awareness of Self.

This story, even apart from its symbolical meaning, has the remarkable implication that one-pointed concentration on the Lord can bring Liberation even if it is not through love but hatred. Great emphasis is laid on this in the Bhagavata. Even in the West there is an example of it in St. Paul whose one-pointed enmity to Christ brought on him the visitation which converted him

into a disciple who could say: "I live, yet not I but Christ in me." A person who hates and attacks religion is usually much nearer to it than one who is indifferent.

In the story of Krishna's birth, Kamsa (the ego), the tyrant king, keeps his sister Devaki (Daivi Prakriti—Divine Nature) and her husband Vasudeva (pure sattva) in prison and kills their children because he fears that her eighth son (the Eighth Avatar) will destroy him. When the birth of Krishna (of Divine Intuition in the heart) takes place the chains fall off and the prison doors stand open, but the Child God has to be smuggled out to safety and brought up in exile (the intuition of Truth kept shielded from the ego) till he has come to maturity and is strong enough to challenge and destroy the tyrant.

Krishna grows up in the house of Nanda (Ananda—Bliss) but the tyrant Kamsa (ego) sends various demons to destroy him. Each of these has a specific meaning. For instance, the first of them, sent while he is still a baby, is Putana, a female demon appearing as a handsome woman who seeks to suckle the child and poison him with her milk. She represents the allure of pre-tentious false doctrine which assails the beginner on the path. The Divine Infant sucks the very life out of her and it is she who dies, leaving him unharmed.

Many such are the meaningful stories.

The Bhagavata is permeated through and through with spiritual wisdom. It appeals to Vaishnavites and Saivites alike: to Vaishnavites because, like all accounts of Avatars, it represents Lord Vishnu as the Supreme; and to Saivites because its teaching rises to the level of pure Advaita. It proclaims all three margas, jnana, bhakti and karma—knowledge, devotion and action—without ever suggesting any incompatibility between them. Its stories fascinate learned and simple alike. Even children are captivated by its tales of Dhruva and Prahlada and the Child Krishna.

THE MUKTIKOPANISHAD

MADGUNI SHAMBU BHATT

THE Muktikopanishad¹ is the last of the 108 more important Upanishads. It is also a sort of conclusion and even index to them. Whereas none of the others mention each other at all, the Muktika gives a list of them in the order in which they should be read, placing itself at the end. For this reason it is probably the latest written of them. Not only does it give a list of the whole 108, but it states to which Veda each one belongs and which invocatory verse is attached to each.

It consists of two chapters. The first contains the above very interesting information and mentions indirect paths to various modes of Liberation; the second is purely and sublimely metaphysical. This second chapter (as Prof. B. L. Atreya points out on p. 3 of his *The Yogavasishta and its Philosophy*) is not an original work but is quoted entirely from the *Yogavasishta*.

'Mukti' in the name of the Upanishad means 'Liberation'. To this is added the suffix 'ka' meaning 'maker' or 'cause', so that the name means 'The Liberation-giver'. If this name is taken together with the word 'upanishad', one of whose meanings is 'approach', it can be taken to mean 'The approach to attainment of Liberation'.

I strongly recommend reading this Upanishad as an introduction to the whole series, as it helps to put them in perspective.

TRANSLATION

CHAPTER I

Invocatory Verses

I take shelter beneath the feet of Ramachandra which can be understood through the Muktikopanishad, that is the abode of the 108 petals of Vedanta beginning with the Ishavasyopanishad.

Harih Om. That is full, this is full. The fullness has been projected from that fullness. When this fullness merges in that fullness, all that remains is fullness.

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

1

Harih OM!

In the beautiful city of Ayodhya Maruti (Hanuman) petitioned Rama, praying to him with due devotion and service. Rama was seated on a jewelled dais, accompanied by Sita, Bharata, Lakshmana, Shatrughna and others.

2

Being praised day and night by Sanaka and other groups of Sages, by Vasishtha Suka and others and by other devotees,

3

Rama sat unchanged although witnessing thousands of changing mental conditions. He sat engrossed in meditation upon his Self. When he came out of samadhi Maruti said to him:

4

"Oh! Rama: You are the omnipresent everlasting, incarnate Bliss.

5

"Oh Head of the Raghava Dynasty! I bow down to you again. I desire, Oh Rama, to know your essential form in order to obtain Liberation.

6

"Oh Rama, graciously tell me how I may easily escape the bondage of worldly life and attain Liberation."

7

"Well said, Oh mighty-armed Maruti," (Rama said). "I will tell you the essential

¹See my article on 'The Sequence of the Upanishads' in *The Mountain Path* of January 1965.

truth. It is that I am well based in Vedanta.^{1a} Therefore you should turn to Vedanta."

8

"What are the Vedantas, Oh Best of the Raghavas, and where? Graciously explain to me."

"Listen, then, Hanuman: I will tell you in detail about the Vedantas."

9

The voluminous Vedas issue forth from the breath of Me as All-Pervading-Vishnu,² and Vedanta is firmly established in the Vedas just as oil in sesame seeds".

10

"Oh Rama of the Raghavas, how many divisions of the Vedas are there, and what are their branches and what place have the Upanishads among them? Please put me right about this."

11

Rama said: "The Vedas are said to be four, that is the Rig-Veda and the others.³ They have many branches, and among these branches are the Upanishads."

12

"The branches of the Rig-Veda number 21, those of the Yajur-Veda 109, Oh Son of Maruta."

13

"Oh Fighter of the Enemy, the Sama-Veda has produced branches to the number of 1,000 and the Atharva-Veda 50 different branches."

14

"It is recognized that each branch has an Upanishad. He who recites a single stanza of them with devotion to Me,

15

"He indeed attains to Union with Me which is difficult to achieve even for the Sages."

"Oh Rama, Prince of Sages, some say that Liberation is only of one type."

16

"Others say that one type of Liberation is to be attained by repeating your name at

Benares under proper instructions from a Guru, others that it can be attained by Sankhya-Yoga, and others that it is only to be won by the path of Bhakti."

17

"Others say that Liberation is of four types, Salokya, and the others⁴ and can be attained by meditating on the injunctions of Vedanta".

18

Sri Rama said: "Perfect Liberation is only one and is the highest thing. Even a person submerged in evil actions, Oh Monkey Lord,

19

"obtains the Salokya type of Liberation and not rebirth in other worlds if he dies in the sacred channel of Brahma at Benares; he obtains instructions in My liberating names.⁵

20

"He attains Liberation from which there is no return to birth, for the great God Siva instructs him in my liberating names when the time is ripe, if he dies in any part of Benares."

21

"Such a one has all his accumulated sins washed off and attains Liberation of the Saroopya type."

^{1a} A twofold attitude towards scripture (and the Upanishads in particular) pervades this Upanishad. In some verses they are declared infallible bestowers of Liberation, while others warn that Liberation is not to be found in them but only in inner control and understanding. The full message must be taken to be that inner control and understanding alone lead to Liberation but that the Upanishads point the way to inner control and understanding.

² Rama, as an Avatar, is regarded as an Incarnation of Vishnu, that is of God in His aspect of Preserver.

³ The 'others' are the Sama, Yajur and Atharva Vedas.

⁴ The 'others' are Saroopya, Sameepya, and Sayujya.

⁵ It is first explained that perfect Liberation is only one. Later in the Upanishad it is explained that this true Liberation is to be attained only through inner control and understanding. First, however, more technical paths are dealt with.

22

"Such is the Salokya type of Liberation (residing in the same world with Me) and such the Saroopya type (resembling Me). The twice-born^{5a} of upright life who is whole-heartedly absorbed in Me

23

"comes to Me through devoted oneness with Me, the Universal. This is called Liberation of the Salokya, Saroopya and Sameepya types.

24

"The twice-born who meditates on my inexhaustible qualities, as instructed by the Guru, attains complete union with Me, like the caterpillar which becomes transformed into a butterfly.

25

"This it is that is the Sayujya (Union) type of Liberation, the most auspicious and the one which brings the bliss of Brahman. Thus Liberation of these four types is to be attained through devoted service to Me".

26

"By what means can the Liberation of Oneness be attained?" asked Maruti. Rama replied: "The study of the Mandukyopnishad alone will suffice to lead seekers to Liberation.

27

"If enough knowledge is not obtained through the Mandukya, then study the Ten Upanishads^{5b} and you will soon attain Enlightenment and rise to My station.

28

"If even then your conviction does not strengthen into Enlightenment, Oh Son of Anjana, you should find it enough to study the first 32 Upanishads and then stop.

29

"But if you seek Videhamukti through dissolution of the body, then study the entire 108 Upanishads. I will tell you in what order and with what peace invocations. This you should follow. Listen it is:

30-39

"1. Isha, 2. Kena, 3. Katha, 4. Prasna, 5. Mundaka, 6. Mandukya, 7. Taittiriya, 8. Aithareya, 9. Chandogya, 10. Brihadaranyaka, 11. Brahmbindu, 12. Kaivalya, 13. Jabala, 14. Shwetashvatara, 15. Hamsa, 16. Arunika, 17. Garbha, 18. Narayana, 19. Hamsa, 20. Hindu, 21. Amrutananda, 22. Atharvashiras, 23. Atharva Shikha, 24. Maitrayani, 25. Kaushitaki Brahmana, 26. Brihad Jabala, 27. Narasimha (purva and utara) tapini, 28. Kalagnirudra, 29. Maitreyi, 30. Subala, 31. Kshurika, 32. Mantrika, 33. Sarva sara, 34. Niralamba, 35. Shukarahasya, 36. Vajrasuchika, 37. Tejobindu, 38. Nadabindu, 39. Dhyana bindu, 40. Brahma Vidya, 41. Yogatatwa, 42. Atmaprabhoda, 43. Narada parivrajaba, 44. Trishikhi Brahmana, 45. Sita, 46. Yoga Chudamani, 47. Nirvana, 48. Mandala Brahmana, 49. Dakshinamurti, 50. Shara-bha, 51. Skanda, 52. Mahanarayana, 53. Advaya Taraka, 54. Rama Rahasya, 55. Sri Rama (purva and utara) tapani, 56. Vasudeva, 57. Mudgala, 58. Shandilya, 59. Paingala, 60. Bhikshuka, 61. Maha, 62. Sharirika, 63. Yogashikha, 64. Turiyatita, 65. Sanyasa, 66. Paramahansa Parivrajaka, 67. Akshamalika, 68. Avyakta, 69. Ekakshara, 70. Annapurna, 71. Surya, 72. Akshi, 73. Adhyatma, 74. Kundika, 75. Savitri, 76. Atma, 77. Pashupata Brahma, 78. Parabrahmam, 79. Avadhuta, 80. Tripura Tapini, 81. Devi, 82. Tripura, 83. Katha Rudra, 84. Bhavana, 85. Rudrahridaya, 86. Yogakundali, 87. Bhasmajabala, 88. Rudraksha Jabala, 89. Ganapati, 90. Jabala darshana, 91. Tarasara, 92. Mahavakya, 93. Panchabrahma, 94. Pranagnihotra, 95. Gopala (purva and utara) tapini, 96. Krishna, 97. Yajnyavalkya, 98. Varahaka, 99. Shatyayani, 100. Hayagriva, 101. Dattatreya, 102. Garuda, 103. Kalisantarana, 104. Jabali, 105. Saubhagyalakshmi, 106. Saraswati Rahasya, 107. Bahvricha, 108. Muktika.

^{5a} The 'twice-born' are members of the three upper castes: Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

^{5b} These are the ten major Upanishads, those on which Sri Shankara wrote commentaries. They are the Isha, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aithareya, Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka.

40

"These are the 108 Upanishads which quieten the three kinds of emotions, bestow enlightenment and lead to non-attachment and which destroy even the three kinds of vasanas.⁶

41-42

"Those twice-born who study these 108 Upanishads after being initiated into them by one who has renounced the world and is well versed in the study of the Vedas, together with the appropriate peace invocations both at the beginning and the end of each Upanishad attain Liberation, although remaining in the body until their prarabdha karma ^{6a} is exhausted.

43

"Then, on the exhaustion of their prarabdha karma, they attain to Videha Mukti, the bodiless state of Liberation, equal to My state. Of this there is no doubt.

44

"The 108 (great) Upanishads are the essence of all the (1180) upanishads and hearing them wards off the attacks of the hosts of accumulated sins.

45

"Oh Son of Pavana, I have personally initiated you my disciple, into this secret science of the 108 Upanishads.

46

"Whether read with understanding or not, this series of 108 Upanishads brings release from suffering to those who read it.^{6b}

47

"But they should not be given to any one at will,⁷ not to an unbeliever or an ungrateful person or one sunk in evil deeds.

48

"They should never be given to one who is not devoted to Me^{7a} or who strays from orthodoxy or lacks devotion to his Guru.

(From here onwards the text is in prose and is not divided into verses)

"Oh Maruta, these Upanishads should be given (by initiation) to one who is a willing

pupil or a good son,^{7b} who is devoted to Me, who is virtuous and of a good family and has a keen intellect. This series of 108 should be given with discretion and after due consideration since, beyond all doubt, one who studies them or even hears them comes to Me. The following is the authentic statement to that effect in the Vedas :

Vidya (Knowledge or Enlightenment) approached Brahman thus : "Pray protect me, for I am indeed a treasure. Never disclose me to an envious person or a crooked cheat. Thus alone shall I remain powerful. I, who am of Lord Vishnu and abide in the Self should be given in initiation after due consideration only to a wise and learned person who approaches you for this and is sober, intelligent and firmly grounded in celibacy".

Then Maruti besought Sri Ramachandra to tell him the invocation which goes with each Upanishad according to which Veda it belongs to. Sri Rama replied :

(Here follow the invocations to be read at the beginning and end of each Upanishad, according to the Vedas they belong to. Only the numbers of the Upanishads are given here, to save space, since their names have already been given in the previous table, so that they can easily be checked up from there.)

⁶ See Chapter II verse 2.

^{6a} Prarabdha karma is that part of one's karma which is due to fructify in this lifetime, so that even a Liberated Man remains embodied on earth until the prarabdha karma of his body has run its course. When it is said that he has no karma, what is meant is that he does not identify himself with the body and therefore does not regard its karma as his.

^{6b} The assertion of the inherent power of scripture apart from its meaning refers to the vibrational or mantric power of sound.

⁷ It will be seen that the severe restrictions that follow as to who can be initiated into the Upanishads take away from the apparently excessive liberality in the statement of their effects.

^{7a} The 'Me' here does not refer to the historical Rama. Not all seekers are worshippers of this Avatar. It refers to the Inner Self, the universal 'Me'.

^{7b} "Or a good son", because a father has the right to give initiation to his son.

THE RIG-VEDA

*Invocation*⁸

May my speech be fixed in my mind, may my mind be fixed in my speech! O Self-luminous Brahman, be manifest to me. O mind and speech, may you bring me the meaning of the Vedas! May what I study from the Vedas not leave me! I shall unite day and night through this study. I shall think of the right; I shall speak the right. May Brahman protect me, may Brahman protect the teacher! May Brahman protect me. May Brahman protect the teacher!

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

for the following ten Upanishads : 8, 25, 38, 42, 47, 57, 67, 82, 105, 107.

THE WHITE YAJUR-VEDA

Invocation

OM. That is full.⁹ This is full.¹⁰ This fullness has been projected from that fullness. When this fullness merges in that fullness, all that remains is fullness.

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

for the following 19 Upanishads : 1, 10, 13, 15, 19, 30, 32, 34, 44, 48, 53; 59; 60; 64, 73, 91, 97, 99, 108.

THE BLACK YAJUR-VEDA

Invocation

Harih OM!

May Mitra be propitious unto us! May Varuna be propitious unto us! May Aryaman be propitious unto us. May Indra and Brihaspati be propitious unto us! May Vishnu of wide strides be propitious unto us!

Salutation to Brahman! Salutation to thee, O Vayu! Thou indeed art the visible Brahman. Thee indeed, O Vayu, I shall proclaim as the right (ritam). Thee indeed I shall proclaim as the true (satyam).

May it protect me! May it protect the teacher! May it protect me! May it protect the teacher!

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Om. May Brahman protect us both (the Guru and the disciple)! May we both obtain the energy to acquire Knowledge! May what

we both study reveal the Truth! May we cherish no ill feeling towards one another!

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

for the following 32 Upanishads : 3, 7, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 31; 33; 35; 37, 39, 40, 41, 49, 51, 62, 63, 69; 72; 79; 83, 85, 86, 93, 94, 98, 103, 106.

THE SAMA VEDA

Invocation

Om. May the different parts of my body, my tongue, breath, eyes, ears, and my strength, and also all the other sense organs be nourished; All, indeed, is Brahman, as is declared in the Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman! May Brahman never deny me! May there never be denial on the part of Brahman! May there never be denial on my part! May all the virtues described in the Upanishads belong to me who am devoted to Brahman! Yes, may they all belong to me!

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

for the following 16 Upanishads : 2, 9, 16, 24, 29, 36, 46, 56, 61, 65, 68; 74; 75; 88, 90, 104.

THE ATHARVA-VEDA

Invocation

OM. May we, O gods, hear with our ears what is auspicious! May we, O worshipful gods, see with our eyes what is good! May we, strong in limbs and body, sing your praise and enjoy the life allotted to us by Prajapati!¹¹

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

for the following 31 Upanishads : 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 26, 27, 43, 45; 50; 52; 54; 55; 58, 66, 70, 71, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81; 84; 87; 89, 92, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102.

⁸ The Invocations are given in the translation of Swami Nikhilananda in his book 'The Upanishads' published by Allen & Unwin.

⁹ The word 'purna' translated here as full can imply 'complete', 'perfect' or 'infinite'.

¹⁰ 'That' is the Unmanifest, 'this' the manifested universe. The emergence of the manifested universe leaves the Unmanifest infinite as it was.

¹¹ The Originator, Creator or Ancestor of mankind.

Persons seeking Liberation and possessing the four qualifications (keen desire to escape from bondage, detachment and the others) ¹² should come with full faith and respectfully bearing offerings to a Sat-Guru ^{12a} of good family, well versed in Vedanta and with love for the scriptures, one who is straightforward in his conduct and seeks to benefit all and who is an ocean of benevolence. Being duly initiated by him, they should ceaselessly engage in listening, reflecting and meditating on the Upanishads until they achieve the dissolution of the three kinds of body ¹³ on the exhaustion of prarabdha. ^{6a} Then they will be free of all bondage, just as the space within a jar is one with that outside when the jar breaks. That is Videha Mukti or Infinite Liberation. It is the same as Kaivalya Mukti or Supreme Liberation. Even those who abide in Brahmaloaka ¹⁴ attain this Kaivalya Mukti along with Brahma himself, having received initiation from him personally. Hence it is said that none can attain to Kaivalya Mukti save

through Enlightenment : not by performance of right actions, such as sacrifices, or by Samkhya or yogic practices such as breath control and worship. Thus declares the Upanishad.

Chapter Two (which is doctrinally more interesting) is said to be taken entirely from the 'YOGA VASISHTA'; since Chapter One has already gone on rather long, Chapter Two will be published in a later issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH.

¹² The other two are discrimination and the following group of six qualities: sama (calm), dama (self-control) uparati (indifference to sense objects), titiksha (forbearance), shraddha (faith), samadhana (composure).

^{12a} An essential or Realized Guru. It would be more correctly transliterated 'Sad', but that would be reminiscent of the English word 'sad' and the pronunciation is more like 'sat'.

¹³ These are the gross, subtle and causal bodies. ¹⁴ Brahmaloaka or the heaven of Brahma is the highest heaven where, as described in the *Bhagavad Gita* Ch. VIII and in the article 'Devayana and Pitriyana' by Bhagavan Das in July 1966 *The Mountain Path*, those who attain to it abide till the end of a cycle of manifestation.

Knowing Him who is the origin and dissolution of the universe — the source of all virtue, the destroyer of all sins, the master of all good qualities, the immortal, and the abode of the universe — as seated in one's own self, He is perceived as different from, a transcending, the tree of Samsara as well as time and form.

— *Svetasvataropanishad.*

* * * * *

Right is austerity (tapas). Truth is austerity. Understanding of the scriptures is austerity. Subduing of one's senses is austerity. Restraint of the body through such means as fast is austerity. Cultivation of a peaceable disposition is austerity. Giving gifts without selfish motives is austerity. Worship is austerity. The Supreme Brahman has manifested Himself as Bhuh, Bhuvah, and Suvah. Meditate upon Him. This is the essence of austerity.

— *Mahanarayanopanishad.*

HYMNS FROM SRI SHANKARACHARYA

THE very brief little survey of the Hindu scriptures which this issue of 'The Mountain Path' constitutes would be incomplete without some tribute to Sri Shankara or Shankaracharya, 'The Teacher Shankara'. His brief life and vast achievement put him in a class quite apart. He was born in Kerala, in South India, in the 7th Century A.D. and died in his thirty-second year. During this short span he wrote commentaries on the principal Hindu Scriptures which are not only formidable in bulk but have remained the most authoritative to this day. At his advent the profoundest Hindu scriptures setting forth the doctrine of advaita or 'no-other-ness' were being neglected and Buddhist and Jain teachings were making great inroads; within his short life he reversed the trend and raised advaita to the position of primacy in Hindu teaching which it has never since lost.

There was nothing dry or bookish, however, about his teaching. While offering the ultimate path of advaita to those who could follow it, he wrote also glowing hymns of devotion and adoration of a personal God for those who needed this support.

Nor was the active side of life ignored. He traversed the whole of India on foot, training disciples as he went. While doing so he founded monastic establishments at the four corners of India which have remained the bastions of advaitic orthodoxy ever since, not only in the theoretical teaching they impart but in the living spiritual tradition transmitted from Guru to disciple.

For a brief, simply written account of the stupendous life and work of Sri Shankara, we recommend 'Homage to Sankara' by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Sri Bhagavan himself translated some of Sri Shankara's works from Sanskrit into Tamil and English versions of three of these are given with brief forewords. Other translations from Shan-

kara will appear from time to time in 'The Mountain Path'.

* * * *

HYMN TO DAKSHINAMURTHI

[Mythology relates that Brahma (that is, God as Creator) created first four youths who were his spiritual offspring. They were expected to assist him in his work but were drawn instead to a spiritual life and neglected this duty. They found a youth of divine lustre seated beneath a spreading banyan tree and facing southward. This was Dakshinamurti, the 'Southward-Facing', for the Guru is traditionally the north pole. He was Lord Siva incarnate. Without words he assumed the posture known as *Chinmudra* or the 'Dakshinamurti mudra'. The three first fingers are held upright and symbolise the three states of being (waking, dream and deep sleep) each of them made up of the three phalanxes which symbolise enjoyment, enjoyer and what is enjoyed. The forefinger stands for the individual being. When it is beside the other three it is separated from the thumb, which symbolises Pure Being, and the four together symbolise the world of sense experience. When it separates itself from the other three and forms a circle with the thumb, the individual has identified himself with the Eternal Witness of all that is. Birth and death are transcended and Pure Awareness remains. The mere assumption of this posture was enough to enlighten the four disciples and no words were needed. The other three hands holding a flame, a snake and the Vedas have their own symbolic significances. The flame represents Saguna Brahman, the serpent the kundalini shakti, a standard symbol of yogic power, and the Vedas, for learning and knowledge.

Sri Shankara himself is looked upon as the manifestation of Dakshinamurti for the Kali Yuga. Sri Ramana, as the invocation here given shows, declares that "That

Shankara who appeared as Dakshinamurti.... abides in Me.”]

his real state of Silence, and who has expressed the nature of the Self in this Hymn, abides in me.

THE HYMN

He who teaches through silence the nature of the supreme Brahman, who is a youth, who is the most eminent Guru surrounded by the most competent disciples that remain steadfast in Brahman, who has the mudra indicating illumination,¹ who is of the nature of bliss, who revels in the self, who has a benign countenance — that Father² who has a southward-facing form,³ we adore.

*

*

To him who by Māya, as by dream, sees within himself the universe which is inside him, like a city that appears in a mirror, (but) which is manifested as if externally, to one who apprehends, at the time of awakening, his own single Self, to him, the primal Guru, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

*

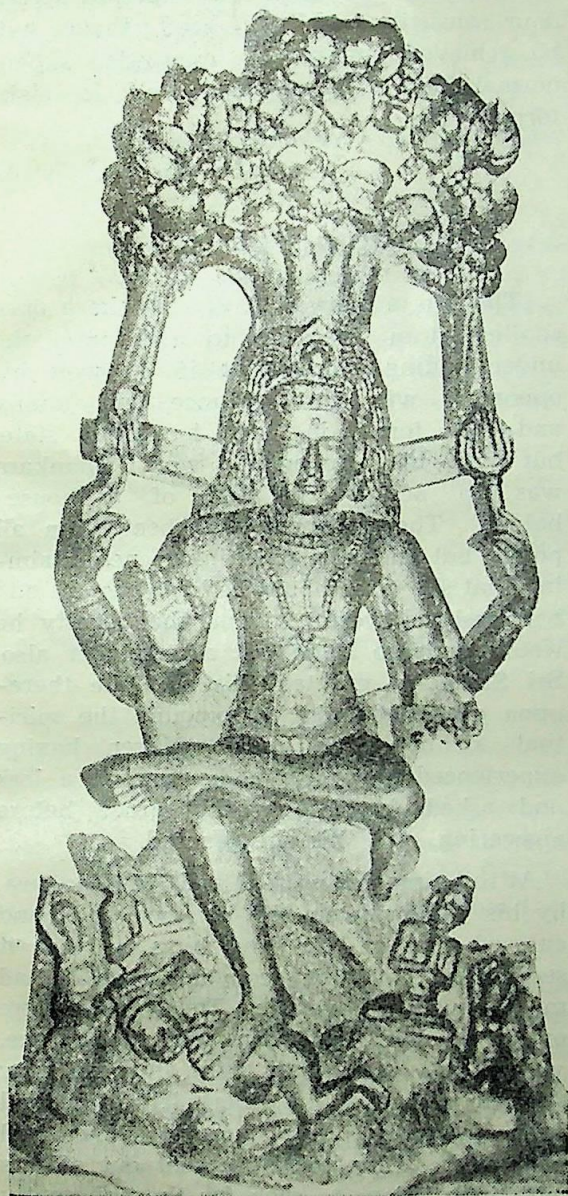
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To him who like a magician or even like a great yogi displays, by his own power, this universe which at the beginning is undifferentiated like the sprout in the seed, but which is made differentiated under the varied conditions of space, time and karma and posited by Maya : to him, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

*

*

To him whose luminosity alone, which is of the nature of existence, shines forth, entering the objective world which is like the non-existent ; to him who instructs those who resort to him through the text ‘That thou art’, to him by realizing whom there will be no more fall into the ocean of re-birth : to him who is the refuge of the ascetics, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !



(Translated from Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's Tamil rendering)

INVOCATION

That Shankara who appeared as Dakshinamurti to grant peace to the Great Ascetics (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat Kumara and Sanat Sujata), who revealed

¹ There are many traditional mudras or postures of the hands which are used in Indian dancing and iconography, each of which has its own meaning.

² The supreme Guru is the spiritual north pole and therefore traditionally faces southwards.

³ ‘Father’ because Brahma was the father of the four youths for whom the hymn was written.

To him who is luminous like the light of a lamp in a pot with many holes : to him whose knowledge moves outward through the eye and other sense organs : to him who is effulgent as 'I know', and the entire universe shines after him : to him, the unmoving Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be ! They who know the 'I' as body, breath, senses, intellect, or the Void, are deluded like women and children, and the blind and stupid, and talk much. To him who destroys the great delusion produced by ignorance : to him who removes the obstacles to knowledge, to the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

*

*

To him, who sleeps when the manifested mind gets resolved, on account of the veiling by Maya, like the sun or the moon in eclipse, and on waking recognizes self-existence in the form 'I have slept till now', to him the Guru of all that moves and moves not, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

*

*

To him who, by means of the mudra indicating illumination, manifests to his devotees his own Self that for ever shines within as 'I', constantly, in all the inconstant states such as infancy, etc., and waking, etc. — to him whose eye is of the form of the fire of knowledge, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

*

*

To the self who, deluded by Maya, sees, in dreaming and waking, the universe in its distinctions such as cause and effect, master and servant, disciple and teacher, and father and son, to him, the Guru of the world, Dakshinamurti may this obeisance be !

*

*

To him whose eightfold form is all this moving and unmoving universe, appearing as earth, water, fire, air, ether, the sun, the moon, and soul : beyond whom, supreme and all-pervading, there exists naught else for those who enquire — to him the gracious Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

*

*

Since, in this Hymn, the all-self-hood has thus been explained, by listening to it, by

reflecting on its meaning, by meditating on it and by reciting it, there will come about lordship together with the supreme splendour consisting of all-self-hood ; thence will be achieved, again, the unimpeded supernatural power presenting itself in eight forms.

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II

GURU STUTI

[There is a story that Sri Shankara once challenged an opponent to a dispute, the understanding being that if he won his opponent was to renounce his family and go forth in the homeless state, but if his opponent won Shankara was to accept the life of a householder. The opponent was beaten on all points but then his wife intervened, claiming that she also should be heard as she and her husband were one and the penalty he would undergo if he lost affected her also. Sri Shankara granted this and she thereupon challenged him to expound the spiritual symbolism of sex. Never having experienced carnal love, he was at a loss and asked for two weeks' grace before answering, and this she granted.

At this time a king died and Sri Shankara, by his yogic power, left his own body and entered that of the dead king, so that it seemed to the latter's courtiers that he had miraculously recovered. The queens were overjoyed but, contrasting the intelligence, vigour and grace that their husband now showed with the dull, inert fellow he had been formerly, they guessed what had happened. They therefore sent out officers with instructions to seek for the apparently dead body of a sadhu and to cremate any such that they found, so that the new king could not return to his former body. They did indeed come upon the apparently lifeless body of Sri Shankara and took it for cremation.

Sri Shankara, however, had taken the precaution of warning his disciples and had told them, if he overstayed his time or if there was any danger to his body, to go to

his palace and sing the following song about the Truth. They did so and he immediately abandoned the king's body and revived his own. Sri Shankara thereafter met the wife of his opponent and, having now gained experience, accepted and won the contest.

The Maharshi translated this song under the title '*Guru-Stuti*'.]

* * * *

1. That is the Truth which the wise realize as the Self, the residuum left over on withdrawing from external objects, with or without form (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), by a careful application of the scriptural text 'Not this-Not this'. That thou art!

2. That is the Truth which, after generating the fundamentals, (ether, air, fire, water, and earth) and entering the worlds, lies hidden beneath the five sheaths, and which has been threshed out by the wise with the pestle of discernment, just as the grain is recovered by threshing and winnowing the chaff. That thou art!

3. Just as wild horses are broken in by whipping and stabling them, so also the unruly senses, straying among objects, are lashed by the whip of discrimination, showing that objects are unreal, and are tethered by the rope of pure intellect to the Self by the wise. Such Self is the Truth. That thou art!

4. The Truth has been ascertained by the wise to be the substratum which is different from the waking, dream, and deep sleep states, its own expanded modes, which indeed are held together by it like the flowers strung together on a garland. That thou art!

5. That is the Truth which the scriptures show to be the primal cause of all, elucidating the point clearly by such texts as 'Purusha is all this', 'like gold in ornaments of gold', etc., That thou art!

6. The Truth has been forcefully proclaimed by the scriptures in such texts as 'He who is in the Sun, is in man', 'He who shines in the Sun, shines in the right eye', etc., That thou art!

7. What pure Brahmins seek so eagerly by repetition of the Vedas, by religious gifts, by earnest application of their hard-earned knowledge, and by renunciation, is the Truth. That thou art!

8. That is the Truth which the valiant have got by seeking, with controlled mind, with abstinence, penance, etc., and by diving into the Self by the self. Realizing it they are considered to be heroes with their highest purpose accomplished. That is the transcendental *Satchidananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) after gaining which there is nothing more to worry about since perfect peace reigns. That thou art!

* * * *

III

HASTAMALAKA STOTRA

INTRODUCTION

[A Brahmin woman went to the Jumna to bathe. Finding a yogi sitting in meditation on the bank she left her only child, a baby of two years old, near him, asking him to take care of it until she returned from bathing. On returning she found to her dismay that the child had died in the meantime through some accident or other. The bereaved mother lamented his death so loudly that the yogi awoke. On understanding what had happened he was moved to pity and in order to console the poor woman gave up his own body by yogic power and entered that of the dead body. Seeing the child revive the mother was overjoyed, took it up and returned home without troubling to find out the secret of the child's miraculous revival. The child did not grow up as a normal boy. He was too contemplative to learn, lisp, play or entertain his parents in any way, so they thought that he must be deaf and dumb.

A few years afterwards Sri Shankaracharya was travelling in the neighbourhood. The parents took their child to him and prayed that he might be pleased to restore it to normal health by means of his divine powers. The Acharya took in the situation at a glance and addressed the following

questions to the boy. The boy in his turn replied immediately, astonishing the audience with the sublimity of his wisdom.

When the parents learnt the truth they left him with Sri Shankaracharya. He was known from this time as Hastamalaka — one of the four leading disciples of the great master.

Hastamalaka means "an embellica fruit on the palm of one's hand". The stanzas expound the sublime Truth as clearly as the fruit seen on one's palm.]

* * * *

TEXT

1. "Who are you? Whose child are you? Whither are you bound? What is your name? Whence have you come? O Child! I should like to hear your reply to these questions".

Thus spoke Sri Shankaracharya to the boy, and Hastamalaka replied as follows:

2. "I am neither man, god, yaksha, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, brahmachari, householder, forest-dweller, nor sannyasi; but I am pure Awareness alone.

3. "Just as the Sun causes all worldly movements, so do I — the ever-present, conscious Self — cause the mind to be active and the senses to function. Again, just as the ether is all-pervading yet devoid of any specific qualities, so am I free from all qualities.

4. "I am the conscious Self, ever-present and associated with everything in the same manner as heat is always associated with fire. I am that eternal, undifferentiated, unshaken Consciousness, on account of which the insentient mind and senses function, each in its own manner.

5. "I am that conscious Self of whom the ego is not independent as the image in a mirror is not independent of the object reflected.

6. "I am the unqualified, conscious Self, existing even after the extinction of buddhi just as the object remains ever the same even after the removal of the reflecting mirror.

7. "I am eternal Consciousness, dissociated from the mind and senses. I am the mind of the mind, the eye of the eye, ear of the ear and so on. I am not cognizable by the mind and senses.

8. "I am the eternal, conscious Self, reflected in various intellects just as the Sun is reflected on the surface of various sheets of water.

9. "I am the single, conscious Self illuminating all intellects, just as the Sun simultaneously illumines all eyes so that they perceive objects.

10. "Only those eyes that are helped by the Sun are capable of seeing objects, not others. The Source from which the Sun derives its power is myself.

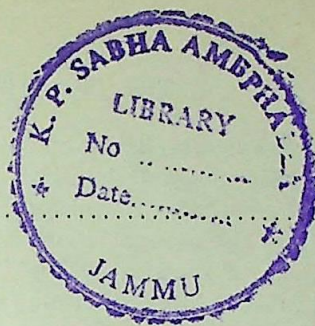
11. "Just as the reflection of the Sun on agitated waters seems to be broken up, but remains perfect on a calm surface, so also am I, the conscious Self, unrecognizable in agitated intellects though I clearly shine in those which are calm.

12. "Just as a fool thinks that the Sun is entirely lost when it is hidden by dense clouds, so do people think that the ever-free Self is bound.

13. "Just as the ether is all-pervading and unaffected by contact, so also does the ever-conscious Self pervade everything without being affected in any way. I am that Self.

14. "Just as a transparent crystal takes on the lines of its background, but is in no way changed thereby, and just as the unchanging moon on being reflected on undulating surfaces appears agitated, so is it with You, the all-pervading God".

SRI RAMANA GITA



By

Dr. V. A. SARMA

Dr. V. A. Sharma is a youthful lecturer in Sanskrit of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, A.P. He has taken *Sri Ramana Gita* as the subject for his doctoral thesis. He is devoting his studies to Hindu doctrine and philosophy generally.

OUTSTANDING in the vast Hindu sacred literature are the Gitas, of which the best known are the Bhagavad Gita, the Ashtavakra Gita, the Avadhuta Gita, the Uttara Gita and the Ribhu Gita.¹ All are in Sanskrit, all proclaim the supreme truth of Advaita and all point the way to Liberation. In our own times a new one has been added in the '*Sri Ramana Gita*' composed by the great Sanskrit poet Kavyakantha Ganapathi Sastri.² This is divided, like the Bhagavad Gita, into eighteen chapters. Like that also, it is in dialogue form, but with many Arjunas, being composed of questions put to the Maharshi by the poet and a number of his friends and followers, with the Maharshi's answers. Like the Bhagavad Gita and unlike the other Gitas, mentioned above, it takes into consideration also a man's life in the world and the obligations it entails.

The Quest

Daivarata, an earnest disciple of the Maharshi, asked: "What undertaking is most necessary to man?" The immediate reply came: "To know his Self on which all undertakings and their results are based".³

The next question was naturally how to do this, and Maharshi replied: "By withdrawing one's thoughts from external objects and remaining in steady, non-objective contemplation of the Self alone". But he also added, in reply to further questions, that other methods prescribed by the ancients (such as mantras) are also good and that niyamas or disciplines of character are helpful until the moment of achievement,

when they drop away, being no longer needed.⁴

The Heart

One stanza in this Gita was written by the Maharshi himself, that is the second stanza of the second chapter. It runs:

"In the Heart-cavern the Supreme alone, in all its elemental purity, shines as 'I', the Self, and is within the direct reach of experience. Enter the heart; search there with the mind or dive deep within or control the movement of the breath, and remain for ever in the Self."

Thus the seat of the Self in the body is indicated and the three methods of attaining it are specified: by conscious quest, by deep diving or by breath-control. In any case, some spiritual discipline is necessary. Nobody can reach the goal by theoretical understanding alone.

Chapter V is called 'Heart-Knowledge' and is, in my opinion, the heart of this Gita. In it the Maharshi declares that the spiritual heart at the right side of the chest is not to be identified either with the physical heart on the left or with the *anahata-chakra* or yogic centre on the level of the heart.

As the physical heart pumps life-blood to all parts of the body, so this heart distributes the light of consciousness through the chan-

¹ The second and third of these were translated into English by the late Hari Prasad Shastri and are obtainable from Shanti Sadan, 29 Chestow Villas, London W. 11.

² For an article on whom see '*The Mountain Path*' of April 1965.

³ *Ramana Gita*, III, 2, 3.

⁴ *ibid.*, III, 4-11.

nel of sushumna to the *Sahasrara chakra* and thence through the whole body. It is mistaking this light for a multiplicity of things which plunges a man into the avidya (ignorance) or maya (illusion) of samsara. This mind which creates all these baffling differences, receives its own light from the Heart, like the moon from the sun. In fact it is the Heart-sun which lights up the whole universe.⁵

The Granthi (The Knot)

The first manifestation of ignorance (avidya) is the rise of the I-thought, the individualisation of the Self. This is described as a knot which the aspirant has to cut or unravel in order to attain Liberation. The idea is found in the Upanishads but it is nowhere described so technically as in the Ramana Gita. It is said there that when the light of consciousness spreading out from the heart is entangled in the network of subtle nerves (known as nadi) the existence of the separate individual self is felt. These two phenomena, the entanglement of the light and the feeling of a limited ego-sense, constitute the knot.⁶

The knot is to be cut and Liberation attained by turning the light of consciousness back to the heart, which it appears to have left, flowing into various regions of the body.⁷ This involves turning attention inwards from the world and thus stripping the subject of its object.

"When the light withdraws from all other nadis and remains in one nadi alone, the knot is cut asunder and then the light becomes the Self."⁷

The cryptic injunction which the Maharshi has been known to give to some one who asked the way: "Go back the way you came", refers to this. It is to be done by concentrated enquiry or inward turning of the attention, which churns up the nadis with the result that the split-mind is unified into one stream and re-enters its abode, the sushumna.⁸ In this state there is no awareness of anything as being other than the Heart, which is the Self.

Even if objects are cognized that does not harm the cognizer since they do not appear other than him. Only the Oneness of Self is felt. In this state the light of Self irradiates the whole body, like heat a piece of red-hot iron. This state is attained in deep meditation called samadhi. In the case of a fainting attack or deep sleep or sudden great fear, joy, sorrow, etc., the mind returns to its seat in the Heart, but unconsciously; it is only in samadhi that it returns there consciously. This conscious return of the mind to its source is Liberation.⁹

Mukti

The Liberated Being who continues to occupy a body is called a Jivanmukta. There is no difference between this Enlightenment and that of the disembodied.

"There being no difference between complete knowledge (prajnana) and Mukti. Mukti is of one type only. One released from temporal bonds while yet in the body is called a Jivanmukta."¹⁰

There are no different types or kinds of Mukti and no degrees of it. Either there is Mukti or there is not. Differences observed by others refer only to the mode of action or manifestation of a Jivanmukta dictated by his prarabdha. Therefore Mukti cannot be gradually built up. It dawns as a sudden illumination.

"Jnana is not gained gradually, step by step and day by day. When the practice becomes perfect it blazes forth in fulness all at once."¹¹

(If any aspirants consider these statements discouraging, let them remember that the same applies to physical changes also, like birth and death. Both are sudden changes, but the approach or ripening towards them is gradual. Realization is

⁵ *ibid.*, V, 3-16.

⁶ *ibid.*, IX, 17.

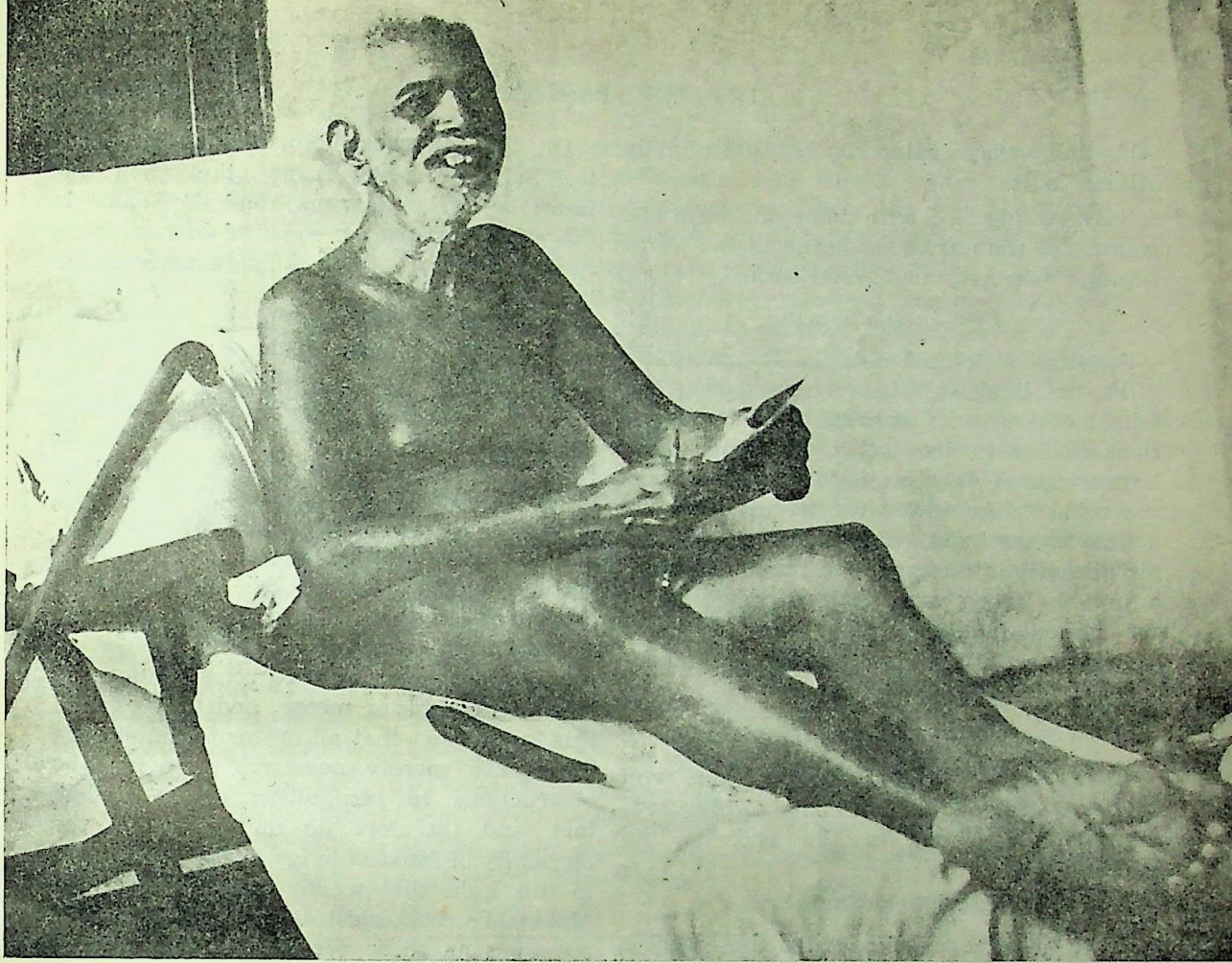
⁷ *ibid.*, IX, 18.

⁸ *ibid.*, IX, 10, 12, 13-16.

⁹ *ibid.*, V, 20, 21.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, XIV, 4.

¹¹ *ibid.*, XVII, 3.



sometimes compared to the rising of the sun ; although this is a definite act, the pre-glow lighting up the land before the sun's disc actually appears on the horizon is already considerable.)

Although there are no stages in Jnana or Mukti (which are the same) there may be pre-glimpses.

"If the mind, once entering the Heart, comes out again, it is only the stage of quest. Jnana is experience from which there is no slipping back."¹²

This implies that although the phenomenon is the same, it cannot be called Jnana or Mukti, not being permanent.¹³

Self or Other

Even that vexed question which many find insuperable, claiming truth for themselves and imputing error to their oppon-

ents, the question whether Universal Being is the very Self of the seeker or a God wholly other than him, the Maharshi here elucidates simply, naturally, in passing.

"The Jnani knows through love that the Divine is none other than his own Self. Another (the bhakta) though he takes Him to be different from his Self, merges and abides in Him.

"That love which flows towards the Supreme (unbroken) like the flow of oil leads inevitably to the Self even though one may not aim at this.

"When the devotee feels himself circumscribed and of little knowledge, then, for the removal of misery, he worships the all-pervading Supreme Reality as God outside him-

¹² *ibid.*, XVII, 5.

¹³ *ibid.* In his 'Self-Enquiry' the Maharshi explains at some length that temporary glimpses of Realization do not make one a Realized Man.

self, and, worshipping It as God, finally attains to It.

"By vesting God with name and form one transcends the names and forms of the world through that very name and form."¹⁴

Life in the World

As already pointed out, the Ramana Gita (like the Bhagavad Gita alone among the Gitas) covers in its teaching a man's obligations in life in the world. It shows how karma marga is also useful for purifying the mind.¹⁵ An individual is to society as a limb to the body. He should subordinate his personal interests to the maintenance of a united, strong and healthy society, like one united family.¹⁶ The wise resort to righteous activity as an example to others and for the welfare of others.¹⁷

The Direct Path

"One seeks to attain; another seeks who it is that seeks to attain. The former goes the long way but in the end he too attains."¹⁸

Lord and Shakti

Up to now I have expounded the teaching from the aspirant's own viewpoint; now let us look at it from the objective or cosmic angle. The appearance of the universe is the result of apparent movement in the Supreme Being (Ishvara or Siva). This movement is called the power or energy (shakti) of the Supreme. Maya is another name for it, used when one wishes to emphasise its illusory nature. Sri Krishna, in Chapter Nine of the Bhagavad Gita, calls it 'Prakriti'. The Lord is the same as His Energy. The difference is only in words, to help in understanding. The same Being is called Ishvara when movement does not appear in it and Shakti when it appears with movement. It is, in our common parlance, by means of his Energy or Shakti that Ishvara creates the universe. *Vyapara* is another word for the movement of the Supreme. It is twofold: *pravritti* or positive action and *nivritti* or negative action. By the former the universe is projected through space and time and by the latter it is withdrawn again into the Being.¹⁹

On the microcosmic or subjective plane the Supreme Being is no other than the Heart or Self (*Swarupa*) and its Shakti is the *vritti*.²⁰ It can be cognized in two ways, simply as Truth or through experience of its working.²¹

Upasana

It has been disputed whether Liberation can be attained by any scriptural study or meditation or other means. Some have argued that to say that it can would be making it the object of action, whereas it is in fact self-subsisting, beyond and unaffected by any activity as Sri Shankara has proved at length in his commentary on the *Brahmasutra*. But for practical purposes all Advaitins do agree on the necessity for some kind of upasana or means, and they explain this by the fact that all means to Self-Realization are merely negative, removing the obstructions to recognition of established fact, and therefore do not contradict the immunity of Moksha to cause and effect. It is in this light that we have to interpret the Maharshi's categorical declaration that without upasana there can be no Realization.²² He also rules out any difference between Jnana as the end (i.e. Moksha) and jnana as the means, saying that the former is only the intensification and permanence of the latter.²³

In the same spirit, as remarked earlier in this study, he admitted the need for *niyamas* or disciplines of life and character.²⁴ It has been argued that they can be of no use since action is impotent for achieving Moksha: but in actual practice they are used and prove effective. The reason given is the same as above, that their use is the negative one of removing obstructions.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, XVI, 3-7.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, VII, 14-19.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, X, 3-11.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, VII, 16, 17, 20.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, VII, 22.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, XII, 17.

²⁰ *ibid.*, XII, 28.

²¹ *ibid.*, XII, 29, 30.

²² *ibid.*, I, 12.

²³ *ibid.*, I, 13.

²⁴ *ibid.*, III, 8.

Cognition and Being

Is the understanding (vritti) 'I am Brahman' or 'Brahman is myself' or 'I am all' or 'All this is Brahman' or any other to be accounted Realization? The reply is that all these forms of understanding are mere imagination. Real Jnana (Knowledge) is simple abidance in the Self (*Svarupavas-thiti*), which is not cognition but experience.

This is followed by the question whether Brahman can be cognized or attained by thought. If an affirmative answer is given it contradicts the transcendence of thought by Brahman, if a negative it is against the fact that the mind is in fact used in upasana. The Maharshi avoids both, saying that when thought approaches Brahman, which is its essence, it becomes transmuted into Brahman and does not subsist separately.

Jnani and Ajnani

It is asked how the Jnani or Liberated differs from the ajnani (ignorant) or

pamara (worldling), since the former also experiences the world. The Maharshi answers that the Jnani has lost all feeling of a difference between himself as world-experiencer and himself in Truth (*swarupa*) and has therefore ceased to regard himself as the doer of what is done. As a result he does not see the world as anything different from the Self and is not affected by it in any way. The ajnani, on the other hand, continues to be affected by the world around him, since he considers it separate from himself. In short, the Jnani never loses sight of the essential oneness in apparent diversity, while the ajnani considers this diversity real.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I should like to say that amid the growing and world-wide interest in the Maharshi not enough attention has yet been paid to this sublime Gita in which his teaching is brilliantly summarised. May this humble study do something to rectify that fault.

Other than whom there is nothing higher, nothing minuter, nothing greater, by that Purusha — the One who stands still like a tree established in heaven — all this is filled.

— *Mahanarayanopanishad*.

* * * * *

As the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not contaminated by external ocular impurities, so, being beyond the world, the one Atman that resides in all beings is never touched by the miseries of the world.

— *Kathopanishad*.

* * * * *

Just as the same metal disc, which was stained by dust before, shines brilliantly when cleaned, so the embodied being, seeing the truth of Atman, realizes oneness, attains the goal, and becomes sorrowless.

— *Svetasvatropanishad*.

THE APPROACH THROUGH SONG

By
T. P. R.

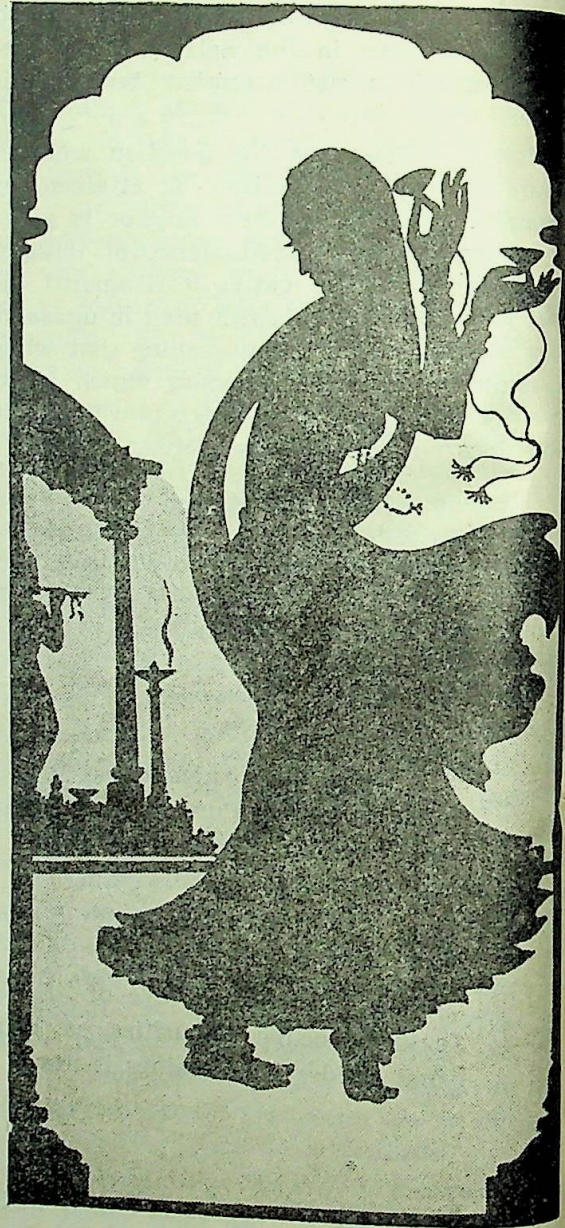
ONE afternoon when I entered the Hall there was already a crowd, so I slipped in and sat in a corner. I sat down by the side of a well built man wearing a lot of vibhuti and with strings of rudraksha mala revealing him as a Veera Saiva. Suddenly Bhagavan turned to me and said: "Don't you know him? He is Kannappa, the disciple of Vallimalai Swami" (a Swami who was famous for singing devotional Tamil songs. Bhagavan himself told us that his voice was simply marvellous). "He sings beautifully, even better than his guru. You should hear him. He brings tears to one's eyes."

Bhagavan went on praising Kannappa, which was something quite unusual, so a real urge to hear him came over me and I begged him to sing. He began to sing Tiruppugazh. I have never heard such a vibrant voice. It even brought tears to my eyes. It was a really thrilling experience. For an hour or more we all listened spellbound. Then the gong went for lunch and we got up reluctantly.

I went out of the hall just behind Bhagavan and he suddenly turned round and said to me: "All this is unnecessary. If you give your mind to it it will lead you astray —no use."

This was a shock to me, as he had just been praising Kannappa sky high. I said nothing in reply but I took it to mean that he did not want me to follow this path.

On another occasion the famous singer Dilip Kumar Roy was in the hall and, after prostrating a number of times before Bhagavan, he spoke as follows: "I know no meditation or samadhi and no sadhana to attain it. I follow the devotional approach of bhakti. I worship God through my songs. By crying to Him I seek to attain Him.



Meera in ecstasy

Bhagavan, is this way right? Please guide me, Master."

For days together dear Dilip had delighted us with his songs of Meera etc. Bhagavan looked graciously at him and said with



“ Emotional devotion ”

immense love and compassion : “ Yes, what you are doing is just what you have to do. Carry on and it will certainly lead you to your goal. Through devotion to God we discharge our emotions and that is a sure way to reach Him.” Dilip prostrated again several times on hearing this.

Again I went out to lunch just behind Bhagavan and again he turned to me. This time he said : “ Tell Dilip that our Tamil saints have said that bhakti is the mother of jnana. So bhakti marga is supreme. The essence of bhakti is in merging with the Universal Being through emotional devotion.”

I was perplexed. The other day he had praised the singing of Kannappa but then advised me not to follow that way ; and now again he was saying that the devotional and

emotional way of bhakti was the supreme and almost the only way to reach God. I pondered over it for a long time, and then it flashed on me that he praised this way to Kannappa who was already following it under instructions from his guru but cautioned me against it and the caution applied only to me personally. And he alone can judge what path is right for me. Now again he was commending the bhakti path as supreme because for Dilip it was supreme.

The path of meditation alone is appropriate for me, and how simply he indicated it ! Whether directly or indirectly he guides us. His Grace is always with us. Even in times of doubt and despair he guides us from within. The Grace of the Guru is indeed supreme !

The Self is not attained through discourses, nor through intellectuality, nor through much learning. It is gained only by him who longs for It with his whole heart. For to such a one the Self reveals Its own nature.

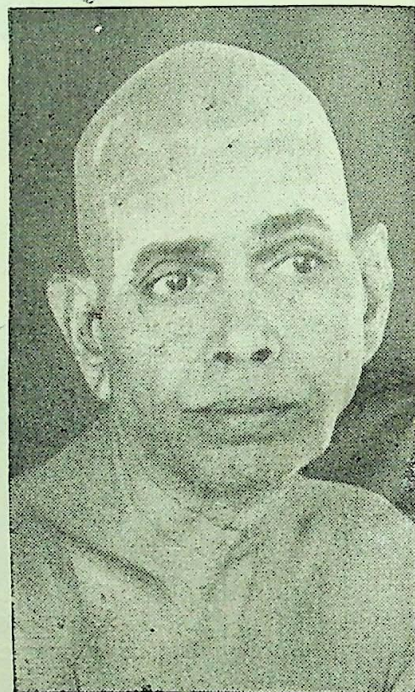
— Mundakopanishad.

HOW MY FATHER CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
the Musician KOVAL-MANI

MY father's spiritual life started in his boyhood when he had darshan of Lord Siva in the guise of an old man and continued to carry him further and further till it induced him to throw up his job at Alleppey in Kerala and plunge into the ocean of spiritual quest, taking to a wandering life, visiting the shrines and other holy places of South India together with his wife. This was long before he came face to face with Bhagavan but for the space of a year he received spiritual guidance and instruction through a human medium. He was able to maintain himself on his wanderings, being a musician who gave harikirthanas. He and his wife had a number of thrilling experiences proving that the Lord is indeed One and pervades everywhere. In 1928 he settled at Coimbatore and in 1930 I had the good fortune of being born as his son. Most of the time poverty stared him in the face but he never actually lacked food. When the last meal was finished and he was left wondering about the morrow the next would appear, but only the next. Many sadhus used to visit him, directed by Providence, either as a means of strengthening his faith or testing his strength.

It was in 1933 that he first went to Tiruvannamalai in the hope of earning something and felt a desire to see the person he had heard spoken of as 'the Maharshi'. Bhagavan was going through some papers when he first saw him. After a while he raised his head, shaking slightly as usual, and beckoned to my father to approach. Hesitant at first but then convinced that the call was for him, my father went up to him and prostrated. "So you have come from Coimbatore? And how are the family?" Bhagavan said, showing, as he so often did, knowledge of the circumstances.



"Wait a little," Bhagavan said, and in that 'little' Nilakanta (my father) was caught as in an eternity.

"Come, let us go to the hall," Bhagavan said, tapping him. Without a word, Nilakanta got up to follow him but then, with a sudden shock, saw the Divine Father walking in front of him and, unable to control himself, cried out "Appa!" (Father). By that time Bhagavan had turned into the doorway of the hall and Nilakanta, hurrying after him, beheld the God Subrahmanyan ahead of him. Before he had time to think Bhagavan was in the hall and motioned to him to sit on his right at the foot of the couch. There he sat, feeling like a child at the feet of its father. The minutes ticked by. People were coming in, asking questions, prostrating, but Nilakanta was obliv-

ous of all this. Then the lunch gong sounded and people got up and went out as usual, taking it for granted that Bhagavan, who was always punctual, would go too. But he did not get up. Nor did Nilakanta. Nilakanta heard a silent voice asking him: "What do you want?" And silently he answered: "Grace." Still neither of them moved. Nilakanta did not even look up at Bhagavan. Suddenly he felt a hand on his shoulder and, looking up, he saw the Sarvadhikari who whispered: "Bhagavan won't get up unless you do. People are waiting in the dining hall."

Nilakanta looked up and saw Bhagavan's usually shaking head as firm as a rock while, through half-closed eyes he was bestowing on him a penetrating look¹ of boundless love and grace! Surrounding Bhagavan's head was a golden halo the size of an umbrella inside which golden light-waves emanating from Bhagavan's head were radiating. Nilakanta forgot everything. In one bound he was at Bhagavan's side and had flung his arms round him. In a voice husky with love he said: "My Father, your devotees are waiting for you. Shall we go?"

"Is that so?" Bhagavan immediately replied. "Yes, of course we will go." And he left for the dining hall followed by Nilakanta.

My father told me that after that there was no further need for him to visit Bhagavan physically. Over the years, as I can testify, his features began to change, taking on something of the appearance of Bhagavan. Devotees and even strangers would look at him and then at the wonderful picture of Bhagavan at his side and exclaim on the likeness.

To the last he used to refer to Bhagavan as his father, and indeed, when I voluntarily took over the massaging of his legs I used to feel that Bhagavan was giving me an opportunity to serve him in that form.

On the day prior to his leaving the body oxygen had to be administered. Suddenly my brother and I began to chant the holy refrain 'Arunachala-Siva'. We were supporting him in a sitting position. He opened his eyes and looked at the picture of Bhagavan in front of him, and tears began to trickle down his face. He indicated that we should lay him down. There was a beautiful smile on his lips. Soon after this he lost consciousness and throughout the night we chanted Bhagavan's '*Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala*'. Incense was burning. A sweet and holy silence filled the entire house. Even the children, usually noisy, were very quiet. There was no movement in his body except the breathing. At 5.30 on October 20th, 1961, the eastern horizon glowed red as though the Holy Arunachala were giving us darshan. There was a slight movement and it was over.

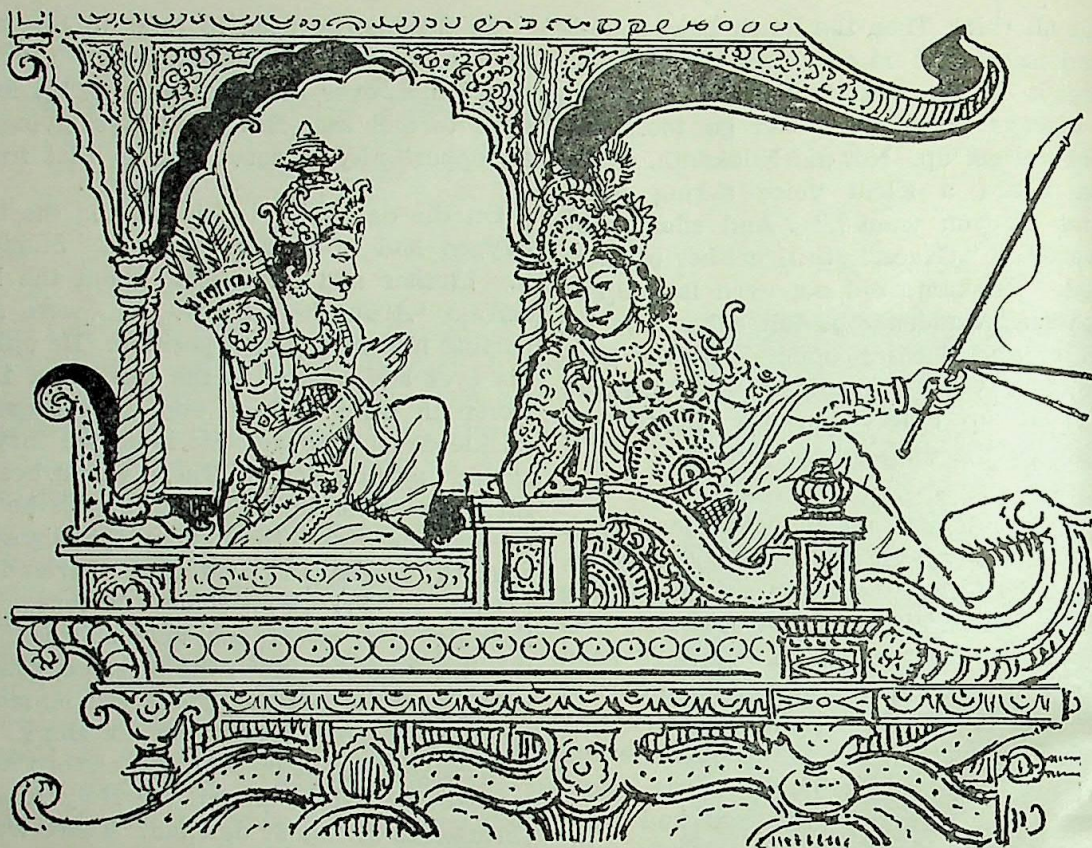
There was no weeping or outer show of grief. As it was puja season, the whole city through which we carried the body wore a festive appearance. Everywhere music, flowers, pandals and images of Mother Durga.

Thus ended the story of the body. The spark of Bhagavan Ramana's eternal flame which had occupied Nilakanta's body merged into its Source in Bhagavan Ramana.

¹ This was the 'initiation by look'. Except when Bhagavan was in the sort of samadhi which is without outer consciousness or was concentrating in a Grace-giving look like this, there was a constant slight shaking or trembling of his head. This was attributed to the power of the spiritual vibration in him—Editor.

(That Atman) can never be reached by speech, nor by eyes, nor even by mind. How can it be realized otherwise than from those who say that it exists?

—Kathopanishad.



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Arjuna said :

By the profound explanation of the Self that you have made out of grace towards me my delusion has been quite dispelled.

2

I have heard from you at length of the origin and dissolution of beings, O Lotus-Eyed, as also of Your imperishable Majesty.

Note : Verse 1 refers to the contents of Chapters Seven and Eight and Verse 2 to those of Chapters Nine and Ten.

3

As You have declared of Yourself, so it is, Divine Lord. But I long to see Your Heavenly Form, O Supreme Being.

(The glories of the Divine described in the previous Chapters awaken curiosity to visualize them. This demand for cosmic vision of the Lord thus comes naturally.)

4

If You deem it possible for me to see it, O Lord, then, Lord of Yoga, show me Your Imperishable Self.

(‘Yoga’ here means Power.)

5

Sri Bhagavan said :

Behold My divine forms, O Son of Pritha, hundreds and thousands of them, of many sorts, many colours, many shapes.

6

Behold Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Asvins and Maruts. Behold also, O Bharata, many wonders not seen before.

(The *Adityas* are twelve, the *Vasus* eight, the *Rudras* eleven, the *Asvins* two and the *Maruts* in groups of seven. These are the divine beings or forces, different manifestations of the One.)

7

Behold here today, O Gudakesa, the entire universe, moving and unmoving and whatever more you would see, all centred in My body.

8

But you cannot see Me with these eyes of yours. I will give you divine sight : behold My Divine Power.

(Again here, 'Yoga' means 'Power'.)

9

Thus speaking, O king, Hari, the great Lord of Yoga, showed the son of Pritha the Supreme Divine Form.

10

With innumerable mouths and eyes, innumerable wondrous sights, innumerable divine ornaments, innumerable divine weapons brandished.

11

Wearing heavenly garlands and attire, anointed with celestial unguents, wondrous, resplendent, boundless, facing all ways.

12

If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze forth simultaneously in the sky it would be like the splendour of that Great One.

Then in the body of the God of gods the Pandava beheld the entire (universe) in one form divided into many.

14

The Wealth-Winner (Arjuna), astounded and hair standing on end, bowed his head before the Lord and with joined hands spoke.

15

Arjuna said :

O God, I see all the gods in Your body as well as the multitudes of beings of all kinds and the God Brahma on his lotus seat and all the Sages and celestial serpents.

Brahma is God in his aspect of Creator.

16

I see You of boundless form on every side, with numberless arms, bellies, mouths and eyes, O Lord of the Universe, O Cosmic Form ; no end, no middle, no beginning do I see to you.

In the *Purusha-Sukta* of the Rig Veda (X) the Purusha is similarly described.

17

I see You with diadem, mace and disc, a radiance blazing everywhere, hard to look upon, dazzling like blazing fire and sun, immeasurable.

The mace and disc are the traditional weapons of Lord Krishna.

18

You are the Eternal Supreme to be realized, the ultimate Treasure of the Universe, the Imperishable, Lord of eternal Dharma. You are, I believe, the Primordial Purusha.

19

I see You with no beginning, no middle, no end, infinite in power, with countless arms, with the sun and moon for eyes, flaming fire for mouth, scorching this universe with Your radiance.

20

The space between heaven and earth and all the (four) quarters are pervaded by You alone. At sight of Your wondrous, terrifying form the three worlds tremble.

21

Behold galaxies of gods entering into You! Some in fear extol You with palms folded, companies of Maharshis and Siddhas crying 'All Hail!' extol You with their hymns.

22

The Rudras, Adityas, Sadhyas, Viswedevas, the two Asvins, the Maruts, the Ancestors, the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas, all gaze astounded at You.

These are various categories of celestial and infernal beings. The siddhas are men who have attained superhuman powers.

23

O mighty-armed, seeing Your huge form with myriad faces, eyes, feet, with myriad bellies bearing fearful tusks, the worlds are horrified. So too am I.

24

Seeing You reaching the sky, blazing with many colours, mouth wide open, with large fiery eyes, I am terrified at heart and find no courage or peace, O Vishnu!

Doctrinally Vishnu is God in His aspect of Preserver, and Krishna, is an Avatar and manifestation of Vishnu.

25

Seeing Your jaws terrible with tusks flaming like the fires of Cosmic Death, I find no directions of space and know no peace. Be gracious, O Lord of gods, refuge of the worlds!

26-27

And all these sons of Dhritarashtra and hosts of the kings of earth, with Bhishma, Drona, Sutaputra and the warrior chiefs of our side also rush headlong into Your fierce tusked jaws, terrible to behold. Some are to

be seen caught in the gaps between the teeth, their heads crushed to powder.

'Sutaputra' meaning 'Son of a Charioteer' was a name used contemptuously for Karna.

28

As the torrents of many rivers hasten to the ocean, so do these heroes of the world of men into Your flaming jaws.

29

As moths plunge swiftly to their doom in a blazing fire, so do these men speed to their doom in Your jaws.

30

Devouring all the worlds on every side with Your flaming jaws, You lick them up. Your radiance lights the whole world while scorching it, O Vishnu.

31

Tell me who You are with so terrible a form. I bow down to You, Great God. Be gracious to me. I seek to know You, the Primal Being; I do not know Your nature.

32

Sri Bhagavan said:

I am Time the mighty Destroyer of worlds engaged now in world destruction. Even without you none of these warriors in hostile armies shall survive.

33

Arise therefore and win fame. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. By Me alone these have been already slain. Be merely the instrument, Left-Handed One (capable of shooting arrow with the left hand).

Actually Arjuna was ambidextrous.

The purpose of the cosmic vision is evidently to shatter the ego of Arjuna completely and to show him that it is the Divine Prakriti (will) that does everything. An individual is merely an instrument in Her hand. He must follow Her and submit his ego at the feet of the Divine. Vide Bhagavad Gita XVIII, 59: "If prompted by egoism, you think 'I will not fight', this determination of yours is vain. Prakriti will compel you to fight."

34

Slay Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other great warriors slain already by Me. Have no fear. Fight and you shall conquer the enemy in battle.

35

Sanjaya said :

Hearing these words of Kesava, the Crowned One, joined his hands and, trembling, prostrated before him again and then said in a choked voice, overcome by fear :

36

It is but right O Hrishikesha that the world is delighted and rejoices in Your praise, the demons flee to all sides in fear and the hosts of the siddhas bow down to You.

37

Why should they not bow down to You, Great One, Originator even of Brahma ? O Unbounded God of gods, Refuge of the worlds, You are the Eternal Being, the Non-Being, and the Supreme beyond both.

38

You are the Primal God, the Primordial Purusha, the Supreme Refuge of this universe. You are the Knower and what is to be known, the Supreme abode ; all this universe is pervaded by You with Your endless forms.

39

You are Vayu (Wind), Yama (Death), Agni (Fire), Varuna (oceans), the Moon, Prajapati (the First Ancestor) and the Great Grand Sire. Salutations to You ! A thousand times and ever again salutations to You.

40

Salutations to You before, behind and on every side, All-in-all, of endless power, Immeasurable ; You pervade all and thus are all.

41-42

For whatever I have rashly or lightly said, calling You 'Krishna, Yadava, friend', treating You as a friend, ignorant of this greatness of Yours, for any disrespect I have shown in play or repose, when sitting or at meals, O Achyuta, alone or in company, I now implore You, the Immeasurable, for pardon.

43

You are the Father of this world, of the moving and unmoving, its great and revered Guru. There is none equal to You in the three worlds, who then can surpass You, Lord of Boundless Might ?

44

Therefore, bowing down to You and prostrating my body at Your feet, I crave forgiveness, Adorable Lord. Bear with me, as a father with his son, as a friend with his friend, as a lover with his beloved.

45

I rejoice that I have seen what none have seen before, and yet my mind is shaken with fear. Show me only Your usual form. Be gracious, Lord God, Refuge of the worlds.

46

Let me see You in the same form as before, four-armed wearing a crown, and with mace and disc in hand O Thousand-Armed Cosmic Form.

Even now, when imploring a return to normal vision, Arjuna still considers it normal to see Sri Krishna with four arms as in iconography.

47

Sri Bhagavan said :

Out of grace for you, I have shown you by My yogic power this supreme form of Mine, splendid, universal, infinite, primeval, never before seen by any other.

Actually, Sri Krishna had once given a brief glimpse of his cosmic form to his foster-mother Yashoda and once as a warning to Duryodhana, the villain of the Mahabharata.

48

I am not to be seen in such form by any other than you, great hero of the Kurus, whether through the Vedas or through sacrifice or study (of scriptures), or gift or ritual or severe austerity.

49

Be not afraid or bewildered at having seen this terrible form of Mine. With fear dispelled and heart made glad behold My usual form again.

50

Sanjaya said :

Having spoken thus to Arjuna, Vasudeva showed again the usual form. In that gentle form the Great One calmed his fear.

51

Arjuna said :

Now that I again see this gentle human form of Yours, O Janardana, I am composed again and restored to my own nature.

Sri Bhagavan said :

Very hard it is to see the form of Mine which you have seen. Even the gods ever long to see this form.

53

I am not to be seen in such form as you have seen Me by study of the Vedas or by austerity or gifts or sacrifice.

54

Only by unswerving devotion can I be known and truly seen in this form, Arjuna, and even be entered into, O Tormentor of the Foe.

55

He who performs actions for Me, takes Me for his Goal is devoted to Me and is free from attachment and aversion towards all beings, he comes to Me, O Pandava.

This is the eleventh Chapter, called '*The Vision of the Cosmic Form*'.

Indeed, all this is the immortal Brahman! He is everywhere — above, below, in front, at the back, upon the right, upon the left! All this world is indeed the Supreme Brahman!

— *Mundakopanishad*.

* * * *

As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in curds, as water in underground springs, as fire in wood, even so this Self is perceived in the self. He who, by means of truthfulness, self-control and concentration, looks again and again for this Self, which is all-pervading like butter contained in milk, and which is rooted in self-knowledge and meditation,— he becomes that Supreme Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance.

— *Svetasvataropanishad*.

* * * *

(That) one (Supreme) Ruler, the soul of all beings, who makes His one form manifold — those wise men who perceive Him as existing in their own self, to them belongs eternal happiness, and to none else.

— *Kathopanishad*.

THE HEDAPARAYANA

INTRODUCTION

In Sri Bhagavan's lifetime Vedic chanting or Veda Parayanam was held twice a day, morning and evening, lasting about forty minutes on each occasion, and this is still continued. This with the puja which follows it is the only ritual which was or is generally attended at the Ashram. Even for this there was and is no compulsion, although Bhagavan obviously approved of people attending it. It was an hour of tremendous silence when he sat immobile as though carved in rock. He never allowed anything to interrupt it. When asked whether people should learn the meaning, so as to follow it, he said no : it was sufficient that the chanting served as a support for meditation.

Despite this, it is also true, however, that the portions used for chanting were carefully chosen and approved by Sri Bhagavan himself. Technically the Vedas are a well-defined group of scriptures, but not all the passages chanted before Sri Bhagavan are technically Vedas. All of them have the sanctity infused by Sri Bhagavan's presence. All of them are recited in Sanskrit. It is felt that they should be made accessible in translation to readers of Bhagavan's journal. Nothing has been deleted from them since Sri Bhagavan's lifetime and only one item added. That is Dakshinamurti Stotra which, mainly on the request of the late Major Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala, for an account of whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of January, 1964), is now used as the opening hymn before the evening chant. An English translation of it, together with two other items by Sri Shankara translated from Sanskrit into Tamil by Sri Bhagavan, is given in the present issue of *The Mountain Path*.

Technically, even listening to the chanting of the Vedas is supposed to be made available only to Brahmins, but this prohibition was abrogated by Sri Bhagavan. It is recognised that the word of the Jivan Mukta is more than the scriptures and Bhagavan's word was accepted. Bhagavan's word was the living Veda, he was the source of the Vedas.

As explained in our article, 'Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy' by Krishna Bhikshu in October 1965, he retained only such elements of orthodoxy as he saw to be appropriate. In his presence Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Hindus and Westerners, sat shoulder to shoulder at the chanting. A North Indian visitor once had the temerity to challenge this and Bhagavan answered curtly: "Sit down and attend to your own sadhana," (which might be rendered: "mind your own business.").

The following is a list of the items chanted:—

MORNING

RAMANA CHATVARIMSAT (Forty Verses in praise of Ramana by Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni)

SRI ARUNACHALA PANCHARATNAM (Five Verses addressed to Arunachala composed by Bhagavan)

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD (the first three chapters)

SRI SOOKTAM (from the Rig Veda)

A small portion of the 4th chapter of the TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD (*Nakarmanā*).

EVENING

DAKSHINAMURTI STOTRAM (by Shankaracharya)

SRI RUDRAM (*Namakam* from the Yajur Veda)

SRI RUDRAM (*Chamakam* from the Yajur Veda)

PURUSHA SOOKTAM (from the Rig Veda)

DURGA SOOKTAM (from the Yajur Veda)

SRI SOOKTAM (from the Rig Veda).

A small portion of the ARUNA (from the Yajur Veda)

A small portion of the 4th chapter of the TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

UPADESA SARAM (Thirty Verses containing the essence of the Maharshi's teaching composed by him)

A small portion of the TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD (*Nakarmanā*).

Further there is a set of 108 names of Bhagavan which are recited daily during morning and evening puja. On special occasions an expanded set of 1008 names is chanted. Both lists are given.

[This is far too much, of course, to quote in one issue, so we shall serialise it.]

No one can grasp Him above, or across, or in the middle. There is none equal to Him whose name is great glory.

—*Svetasvataropanishad*.

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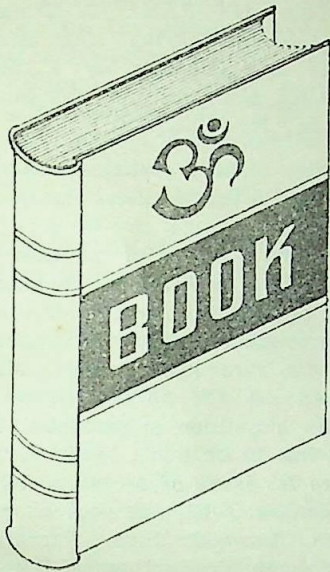
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His form is not to be beheld; none ever beholds Him with the eye. Those who meditate on Him with their minds undistracted and fixed in the heart know Him; they become immortal.

—*Mahanarayanopanishad*.



REVIEWS

✓
MYSTIC APPROACH TO THE VEDA AND THE UPANISHAD: By M. P. Pandit. (Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 127. Price: Rs. 3).

Hinduism had much to learn from the West in the 19th century, and Western educated Hindus justifiably put themselves in the position of disciples. What was not justified, however, was that they still maintained this position and echoed Western scholarship when this scholarship exceeded its competence by sponsoring a crude materialistic interpretation of the Vedic hymns. Today there is a change of tone. A significant part of Western scholarship has itself outgrown the nineteenth century ignorance of and hostility to spirituality in general and non-Christian spirituality in particular. A rediscovery of the Vedas is taking place in which Hindu scholarship is taking the lead as indeed it ought to. In our issue of January 1967 we reviewed Prof. A. C. Bose's 'Hymns from the Vedas', a translation which does much to rectify previous purblind scholarship.

Mr. Pandit's little book is a powerful vindication of the Vedas. It is cogent and well documented and remains highly readable despite its erudition. He has concentrated particularly on two points, first on disproving the attempt to represent Soma as a mere physical intoxicant and expounding its mystic symbolism, and secondly on showing the reverence in which the writers of the Upanishads held the Vedic hymns. He has succeeded magnificently in both objectives.

The author lays all credit at the feet of his instructors, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Kapali Sastri,

yet it is clear that his own intuitive understanding and arduous study have also contributed much to the making of the book.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

VEDASAMIKSHA: Ed. Dr. E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma. (Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. Pp. 127. Price: Rs. 6.)

This representative collection of the Papers submitted at the Vedic Seminar held at Sri Venkateswara University in 1964, focusses the light of modern research on the oldest known Scripture, the *Veda*. The general trend of these studies is to look upon the Veda not as litany of nature-worshipping barbarians at the dawn of civilisation, but as a record of the aspirations, thoughts and ways of life of a people over a long stretch of three millennia. The hymns of the Veda as available to us in their present form are only a portion of the vast literature of the kind that was salvaged at the end of an epoch in the development of humanity.

In those times there was no water-tight division between things secular and things spiritual; all life was one and every part of it was related to the Supreme Godhead — or its emanations, the Gods — around which day-to-day life was consciously organised. That is why we find almost every branch of life-activity reflected in some way or other in these hymns. The learned papers in this volume draw attention to this feature of the Veda. Astronomy, Chemistry, Agriculture, Polity, Music, Prosody, Geography are some of the topics that are interestingly developed in the

context of the Veda. The *Vedic Concept of Waters* is a striking contribution. Prof. E. Anantacharya writes at considerable length to prove that these 'waters' are not merely physical waters but are currents of 'Consciousness that take different forms on the different levels of this many-tiered creation.

The papers in Sanskrit deal more with the textual aspects of Vedic study. There is an elegant article on the origins of the Darshanas in the Vedic literature by Sri Ramachandrachar.

The volume stimulates interest in Vedic studies and is a welcome contribution on the subject.

M. P. PANDIT.

✓ THE YOGAVASISHTA AND ITS PHILOSOPHY: By B. L. Atreya, 3rd Edition. (Darshana Printers, Moradabad, U.P. Pp. 184. Price: Rs. 12.)

The Yoga Vasishta is a unique work of value not only for theoretical study but for practical sadhana. Ramatirtha described it as "the greatest work ever written." The author speaks from indubitable direct experience and at once carries conviction. Dr. Atreya is a lifelong student of it and presents its teachings with admirable fidelity. He remarks that there is much repetition in it and that it lacks logical classification, but this is of the nature of the work and rather an asset than a flaw. Divine Knowledge is a study which needs to be rubbed in and the teaching will bear any amount of repetition. Vasishta himself says that as the pupil advances in understanding the teaching requires to be adapted and varied. He declares: "I spread my net of words to catch the mind-bird and bring it to the Atma." It is important to approach the work as arranged and presented by him and any attempt to improve upon the classification of the material or to re-arrange it will only detract from its purposefulness.

On the whole, however, Dr. Atreya has well brought out the salient features of the teaching in this small volume. With remarkable clarity he presents Vasishta's teaching that everything one perceives is in one's own mind. 'God', 'Reality', 'Unreality', are all thoughts and are the same mind-stuff of which the entire universe is made. There is thus only Reality and its appearance as world, ego and God, just as the Maharshi says in verse 2 of his *Forty Verses on Reality*.

This is a valuable introduction to a work which should be read in the original or in translation.

DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI.

✓ THE PETITION OF RAM: A Translation of Tulsi Das's *Vinaya-Patrika* with an Introduction, Notes and Glossary by F. R. Allchin (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 335. Price: 48 sh., for UNESCO).

It is a matter of deep gratification to all lovers of Tulsi Das to see this excellent translation of the *Vinaya Patrika*, a classic in its own right and amongst the vast writings of the poet second in popularity only to his immortal *Ramcharitmanas*. The unusual approach of the poet in the planning of this most original book, his devotional fervour combined with rare poetic talent, all together create a spell on the mind of the sensitive reader. When a petition is presented to royalty supplication has to be made to the door-keepers and courtiers for leave of access to the king. So in sweet humility Tulsi addresses his prayers to Ganesh, the Sun-god, Siva, Parvati, Ganga, Jamuna, Hanuman, the brothers of Ram, Sita and last of all to his Master Ram. The majestic aspect of the Lord's character is kept in view here. Tulsi as the supplicant delights in effacing himself so that the greatness of his Master might shine in undiminished splendour. He extolls the glory of the Lord's name and loves to dwell on the compassion and mercy of God which flows so abundantly to sinners and lowly creatures like himself. The only boon he seeks from the gods and goddesses is devotion to the feet of Ram.

In spite of its Indian setting, its many references to mythology and traditional Hindu views such as karma and rebirth, the appeal of this book is universal. The author of *The Petition of Ram* is well aware of this uplifting quality for in his introduction he says, '*Vinaya-Patrika*' establishes Tulsi as one of the great mystical writers of the rich Indian tradition and he may fairly rank among the great mystics of the world.

How difficult the task of a translator can be is known only to those who have tried to do it themselves. As the author points out they have the alternative of following different methods such as 'a close literal translation' in which much of the original meaning is lost, 'a free translation' which attempts 'to obtain the spirit of the original without particular attention to the actual words', or the adoption of 'the Indian commentatorial style' which 'allows the translator to show clearly his own interpretation of difficult passages'. But the songs of *The Petition of Ram* do not share any of the above defects. Whether in themselves or in comparison with the original they are most pleasing to read. Three factors seem to have immeasurably enhanced the value of this book; they are: the enviable gift of choice

words, a scholarship which has painstakingly studied Tulsi Das, his contemporaries and antecedents, and a sympathetic insight into an alien belief and culture. The author hopes that his book will add lustre to the English language. May we hope that it will also cement the growing understanding between India and the West!

MRS. CHANDRA HANDOO.

✓ **RAMAYANA SAMIKSHA:** Edited by E. R. Sri Krishna Sarma. (Venkateswara University, Tirupati. Pp. 116. Price: Rs. 5.)

This small book contains the collection of papers on Srimad Ramayana presented at the Seminar held in February 1965 under the auspices of the Sanskrit Department of Venkateswara University. Besides the inaugural address by Sri K. Pampapati Rao and two presidential addresses by Sri B. R. Sarma and Sri P. Nagaraja Rao, there are eight other papers bearing on the great Epic. Four of them show the impact of Valmiki's work on the regional literature of this country such as Hindi, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. The Jain version of the story of Rama in the Prakrit language is dealt with by H. L. Bhayani in a separate paper. Sri T. K. Gopalswami Iyengar, in a well-written paper, interprets the Ramayana from the Vaishnava standpoint of Saranagati Tattwa. One or two seeming lapses from the strict code of dharma with which Rama is charged are examined with much insight by the Editor of the Volume. The adaptability of the slokas to musical recitation is well set forth in a Sanskrit paper by Sri Anantakrishna Sarma.

While the writers in the regional languages have drawn their inspiration from Valmiki, the poets' poet, and have also kept fairly close to the original in respect of the major events, they have not hesitated to make additions and alterations in respect of details. Some of these have been completely omitted, others have been assigned a different place and yet others changed considerably. Some new episodes are also to be found in these regional versions. Such departures are but natural. In a vast sub-continent presenting a wide variety of customs and manners, the Ramayana is bound to take the colour of the locality in whose language it is presented by a poet gifted with imagination and daring. But the remarkable point is that these regional versions of the Ramayana, in spite of deviations from the original, emphasise the central motive of the story, namely dharma. Most of them present Rama as a human being who faced innumerable odds most cheerfully in his adherence to what he considered right conduct in the various situations in which he found himself.

The only notable omission in it is a paper on Kamban's treatment of the theme of the Ramayana. It is too great a work to be omitted. It is unfortunate that a work whose popularity is second to that of none among the regional versions of the Ramayana should find no place in the book.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER.

✓ **MAHABHARATA:** Translated by Kamala Subramaniam. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay-7. Pp. 766. Price: Rs. 30.)

The mighty epic centred around the Pandava brothers is far more than a tale of adventure. So much and varied instruction is woven into it that the saying has become current that what is not to be found in the Mahabharata is not to be found anywhere; and it has come to be known as the 'Fifth Veda'. It is illuminated by the personal charm and profound teaching of Sri Krishna. In the very centre of it is enshrined the Bhagavad Gita. Like a golden thread running through it is the theme of dharma that is of right and honourable conduct. It is by no means idealised or romanticised; villainies in plenty are recorded and violent passions come into play; but the yardstick of dharma remains the infallible measuring rod. It is indeed given a new subtlety and profundity as Sri Krishna turns it from the letter to the spirit of honour.

In condensing this vast work to something under eight hundred pages the present translator has not impaired the zest of it. The essentials of both teaching and episode remain. It is a book that is hard to put down.

The translation is free and vigorous with no archaisms of style. However it is far from perfect. There are mistakes in English and occasional infelicities of style ('With a smile he felled the banner of Nakula and with an arrow he killed his charioteer.' p. 457). What is more serious is that the translator sometimes intrudes opinions or interpretations without indicating the fact. Any modern interpolations in an old text should be indicated either by printing them in a different type or by direct acknowledgement, as C. Rajagopalachari does in translating the Ramayana. Above all, no condensation or editing should have been used with the Bhagavad Gita. A scripture is not to be tampered with. After all these qualifications, however, this remains a fine, bold rendering keeping both the tension and the nobility of the original.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

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THE WISDOM OF UNITY (Manisha Panchakam of Sri Sankaracharya). By T. M. P. Mahadevan. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 48. Price: Rs. 3.)

This is a famous stotra composed by Sri Sankaracharya in five verses. As Sri Sankara was going to the river Ganges he came across a Chandala, a low caste untouchable person, and bade him go away. The Chandala asked him where he should go, since the body is insentient and its movement has no meaning, while the Self is One and thus Immovable. Sankara, listening to these words, recognised that he must be Lord Siva himself in human form and composed these five verses glorifying the Unity of Brahman. According to Balagopalendramuni, who has written a commentary on these verses, the first four are based on the four major texts respectively "Consciousness is Brahman" of the Rigveda, "I am Brahman" of the Yajurveda, "That thou art" of the Samaveda and "This Self is Brahman" of the Atharvaveda. The last verse glorifies the ecstatic bliss of Brahman. The verses have a prologue and an epilogue, the former giving the background of the story and the latter a practical conclusion.

Dr. Mahadevan who has edited these five verses has given a transliteration after the version in Devanagari script, followed by an English translation and detailed explanation. The translation is both literal and lucid. The explanation or commentary elucidates the contents of the verses and removes objections to the fundamental principles stated there. In his commentary he has made use of the Sanskrit commentaries of Madhuranjari and Tatparyadipika. The work begins with obeisance to Sri Sankara and ends with a quotation from Sankara's commentary on the Mandukya-karika both suited to the text. The learned editor combines scholarship with lucidity, except perhaps in Pp. 11—12.

The verses in the original Sanskrit are simple and deserve to be recited and reflected upon by the spiritual aspirant. The translation and the commentary are also useful. Dr. Mahadevan has done excellent service in editing this beautiful text.

✓
PROF. G. V. KULKARNI.

✓
SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMAM with the commentaries of Sri Sankaracharya and Parashara Bhattar. (Ganesh & Co., Madras. Price: Rs. 12.)

The Vishnu Sahasranamam occupies a special place in the Anushasana parva (canto) of the great epic Mahabharata. It is a chain of the thousand names of the Lord. The recitation of

the names of the Lord is one of the traditionally hallowed modes of God realization called Japa Yajna. It is also described as *nama sankirtana*. It is wrong to hold that the repetition of the Lord's name is a thoughtless mechanical occupation. The name sinks into our life and becomes powerful. The Christian Bible affirms that "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." The Puranas hold that in the Kali Yuga the uttering of the name of the Lord saves us. The Bhagavata, the Vishnu Purana and the Saints of India have all glorified the efficacy of the repetition of the name. Sri Krishna in the Gita says "I am the Japa Yajna among yajnas". The literature on this subject is Vishnu Sahasranamam. After having listened to the discourse on Dharma, Yudhishtira asks Bhishma, "What do you consider the greatest of all dharmas? By reciting what will human beings be liberated from samsara?" Bhishma replies that in his view the devoted adoration of the Lord with hymns of praise and by his thousand names is the dharma which is superior to all others. It is by way of reply to this question that we have the Vishnu Sahasranamam. The names connote attributes. Each name of the Lord the Bhagavata says describes an exploit. The Lord possesses infinite qualities, hence he has thousands of names. The book under review gives us the text, translation and introduction along with two commentaries of the book, i.e. one from Sankara and the other from Parasara Bhatta, who belongs to the school of Ramanuja. The commentaries are profound. Sankara regards the thousand names as superior to all sacrifices because: "It does not involve any injury to any being in the process." He calls it Ahimsa-yaga. For doing it you need no collection of money or material, nor need you observe any particular time, place or procedure. Bhatta's commentary is full of praise for the Lord and is a record of devotion and unqualified and absolute self-surrender to the Lord.

In the present edition the translation is literal and sometimes not academic. But to translate a classic is not easy. Careful and diligent proof-reading would have spared us the ugly two-page Errata. The English knowing world gets a glimpse of this great work in the volume under notice.

PROF. P. NAGARAJA RAO.

THE GREAT INTEGRATORS: THE SAINT-SINGERS OF INDIA: By Dr. V. Raghavan (Publications Division, Delhi-6. Pp. 184. Price: Rs. 2.25.)

In this amplified version of the Patel Memorial Lectures for 1964, now issued with a compre-

hensive Anthology, we have god's plenty of sacred songs all for a song. Dr. Raghavan, whose erudition is only matched by his enthusiasm, takes in his sweep fifteen centuries of time and ranges at will over the regions where Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Punjabi, Hindi, Bengali and Assamese are spoken. The vast and active movement of integration which began with the Bhagavata and is even now at work with the bhajans popularised by Gandhiji, not to mention All India Radio and popular films on the Bhaktas, serves to bring together not only the various corners of India, but all the social and intellectual strata, from Maharajas and Maharishis to the masses. The songs cross sectarian and even religious frontiers and the singers come from all trades and professions—scholars, weavers, potters, butchers and cobblers. The contents appeal to the populace, but they maintain high standards of correctness of doctrine and purity of taste.

Dr. Raghavan's quotations are not only apt but convincing; praise for our culture is fetched from foreign and sometimes reluctant witnesses. One quotation from an English writer reads: "The spiritual men of India, a great and watchful multitude whose spiritual status is unattainable, are many of them Catholics in a deeper sense than we of the West have yet given to the word...." (p.74). To prove the possibility even to-day of "being still in the midst of one's activities", Dr. Raghavan cites the recent example of Gandhi, whose impact on his people proves, as Toynbee declares, that "this spiritual gift, that makes Man human, is still alive in Indian souls." The lectures (100 pages), the Anthology (75 pages) and the Bibliography (9 pages) follow a uniform plan and support one another admirably.

PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN.

LIFE SKETCH OF PUJYA NARAYANASWAMI:

By (Miss) Sudha Rathí. (Parmanand Prakashan Mandir, Matunga, Bombay-19. Pp. 86. Price: Rs. 2.)

The compiler of this book did not know Sri Narayanaswami personally, although he died as recently as 1956. She has been fortunate enough, however, to draw on the recollections of two who did: Yogi Ramananda Swami and Parmanand Swarup Sri Champakbhai, the former a companion and the latter a disciple. Ramananda Swami's recollections have been shaped into an unsophisticated but charming account of the rare world of saints and sadhus tramping the Himalayas from one holy place to another. The two companions are convincingly described: both

disciples of the same guru (from whom indeed they had to extract initiation), but Narayanaswami surging with joy and devotion, plunged in japa, while Ramananda was austere and irascible.

Sri Champakbhai (who is now a swami and at whose Mandir this book was published) recollects Narayanaswami's occasional visits to the cities of the plains in his later years. He shows him surrounded by disciples, leading kirtan, often lost in ecstasy. His intuitive knowledge and loving guidance of his disciples is described.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY OF SRI SWAMI-NARAYAN:

By H. T. Dave: Foreword by Dr. K. M. Munshi: (Published by Akshar Bhavan, 19, Lakhamsey Napoo Road, Dadar, Bombay-14 DD. Pp. 186+XXIV. Price: Rs. 10.)

Besides the Preface and Introduction, the book under review falls into two parts, part I comprising twenty-one chapters and part II seven chapters. The former is largely occupied with the work of Sri Swaminarayan as a religious reformer. The latter sets forth his metaphysical position.

He was born in a small village near Ayodhya and his original name was Ghanashyam. In boyhood he learnt all the sastras and acquired such mastery as to be able to intervene effectively in philosophical disputations between the adherents of Sankara's Advaita and of Ramanuja's Visishtadvaita. He was a convinced exponent of Visishtadvaita. He believed in the ultimacy of difference. The Highest Brahman was Purushottama; Akshara Brahman was lower in rank: the jivas or souls were the lowest in the hierarchy. Each jiva had its own individuality and retained it even in the state of Moksha. He firmly believed that realism and pluralism were given facts of experience and there was no explaining them away.

But strangely enough it is stated on page 158: "Akshara Brahman is the highest to be attained for a mumukshu. The complete identification with the Akshara Brahman is the nirvikalpa samadhi or the highest mukthi." On the next page it is stated: "Jivanmukthi is attainable here only and the holding of the physical body is not incompatible with the release of the soul from Maya or the shackles of Karma. Since atma is the knower, his awakened knowledge separates him from the physical body. It is not necessary to be physically disembodied to enjoy this bliss as it is knowledge of one's own self

as Brahman, attained and established, that blots out the world within."

But Swaminarayan's main work was as a religious reformer. He was well equipped for this task both by virtue of his learning and his spotless character. In the course of his travels he came to Lejpur in Saurashtra where he received Vaishnavi Diksha from Sri Ramananda. Soon he became the guru of the ashram at Lejpur. From this position of spiritual eminence he did much useful work in infusing the spirit of true religion in the minds of the people of Gujarat and Saurashtra.

The author writes with much earnestness and devotion. This is the saving feature of the book. His English leaves much to be desired. For his broken English he thinks it sufficient excuse to say that he is only a 'commerce graduate' (page XXIII of the Introduction). The book would have made a much better impression if it had been written in faultless English and if the facts relating to Sri Swaminarayan's work as a religious reformer had been set forth in a more realistic manner, avoiding the usual exaggerations that gather round a great personality.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER.

OTHER BOOKS

SRI KRISHNA AND HIS GOSPEL: By Shuddhananda Bharati. (Yoga Samaj, Madras-20. Pp. 107. Price: Rs. 2.)

Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati presents the Gita accompanied by accounts of the symbolism of Sri Krishna's early adventures. These, incidentally, are normally and traditionally regarded as symbolical.

SADHANA — SPOTLIGHTS BY A SAINT: By M. M. Varma. (Manava Seva Sangh, Vrindavan, U.P. Pp. 70. Price: Rs. 1.25.)

Mr. Varma has written a study of a Swami who prefers to remain unnamed. His teachings, while (or because) not spectacular seem sound. Particularly striking, because often overlooked, is the following reminder; "In the renunciation of aimless ramblings of the mind lies the key to creative thought."

THE SYMPHONY OF LIFE: By B. Natesan. (Copies can be had from Higginbothams Private Ltd., Madras-2. Pp. 42. Price: Re. 1.)

The random thoughts on life expressed in the brochure "The Symphony of Life" deserve to be studied, though no reader will agree with the author in toto. To the modern man whose life is marked by restless activities the author's plea for

a life of leisure and peace may look odd, but there is much sense in what he says. Most young men who are very active and who take pleasure in being active fail to understand that peace and rest are the ultimate objects of all these activities.

THOUGHTS ON ISLAM AND OTHER SUBJECTS: By Haji Ahmed Ali. (Sri Raghavasimham Press, Madras-15. Pp. 133. Price: Rs. 5.)

LIFE IN VERSE: By Haji Ahmed Ali. (3/2, Alandur Road, Saidapet, Madras. Pp. 54. Price: Rs. 4.)

The mystic thoughts of Haji Ahmed Ali are pleasing. They are dedicated to his Master, Mustan Bava. His attempt to write English verse is regrettable, however.

BRIGHT PATH WAY (sic) TO GOD: By Visnu Dass. (International Book Service, Deccan Gymkhana, Poona-4. Pp. 100. Price: Rs. 2.)

Visnu Dass groups the Gita verses according to theme, pointing out the food for study and reflection in each group.

PICTURES OF A PILGRIM OF PEACE: By C. P. M. Abeyesekera and H. L. D. Mahindapala. (Atka-Jyoti Nilayam, Ceylon. Pp. 42. Price: 2.50.)

This is a small illustrated souvenir of K. Ramachandra, Editor of the 'Religious Digest', Ceylon, and a devotee of Bhagavan. Mr. Ramachandra is photogenic and the souvenir contains some striking photographs. There is also one of Bhagavan.

TEMPLES AND LEGENDS OF BENGAL: By Roy Choudhury. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. 167. Price: Rs. 2.50.)

Throughout India there is a wealth of temples, each with its own legends, its own ritual, its own devotional traditions and practices, many of which are derived from some saint. Few of these are widely known to the outside world. Mr. Roy Choudhury has performed a useful service in collecting records of many of those of Bengal. The photographs also show the characteristic architecture of that part of India.

SOUVENIR: SRI VAISHNAVI SHRINE. (Published by The Sanmarga Sangam, Tirumullavayal, Madras-54. Pp. 98. Price: Rs. 3.)

Scripture and tradition hold many accounts of a Divine Presence fusing with the devotion of its worshippers to create a powerful influence felt

inwardly and manifested in outer events. Usually, however, this is in past ages. It is all the more remarkable to see such a process taking place before our eyes in this twentieth century. What makes it still more striking is that Sri Parthasarathi, the founder of this shrine, began as a strong disbeliever in the power indwelling a statue and was only convinced by experience.

The Souvenir is very attractively produced and the number of donations it has received is enough to show what popularity this private shrine of recent origin has already achieved.

It includes an account of the life of Sri Bhagavan as also of a few other Swamis. Among them is Seshadri Swami, the strange, enigmatic Swami who arrived at Tiruvannamalai a few years before Bhagavan and was connected with him in the early part of his life.

ASHRAM REPRINTS

MAHA YOGA or The Upanishadic Lore in the Light of the Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, is an old favourite. Its author, under the pseudonym of 'Who', was one of the Maharshi's earliest disciples and was well known for years at the Ashram. It is now appearing in its sixth edition at Rs. 4. (10sh; \$1.50).

S. S. Cohen, who was introduced to our readers in our issue of April, 1967, is another of the early disciples. His GURU RAMANA, Memories and Notes, is appearing now, enlarged and revised, in its third edition at Rs. 2.50. (6 sh. 6 d.; \$1).

The late Major Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala) translated THE POEMS OF BHAGAVAN into English verse. The second edition of this work is now available at Rs. 0.75. (1 sh. 6 d.; \$0.30).

RAMANA



Pictorial Souvenir

RELEASED ON 18-6-1967

in Commemoration of KUMBHABISHEKAM

TO

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We have brought out a Pictorial Souvenir on Foreign Real Art Paper, containing 86 full page reproductions of rare photographs of Sri Bhagavan. It also contains 32 pages of thoughtful articles specially contributed. Size: 5½" x 8". A book worth possessing and preserving; such an opportunity may not recur.

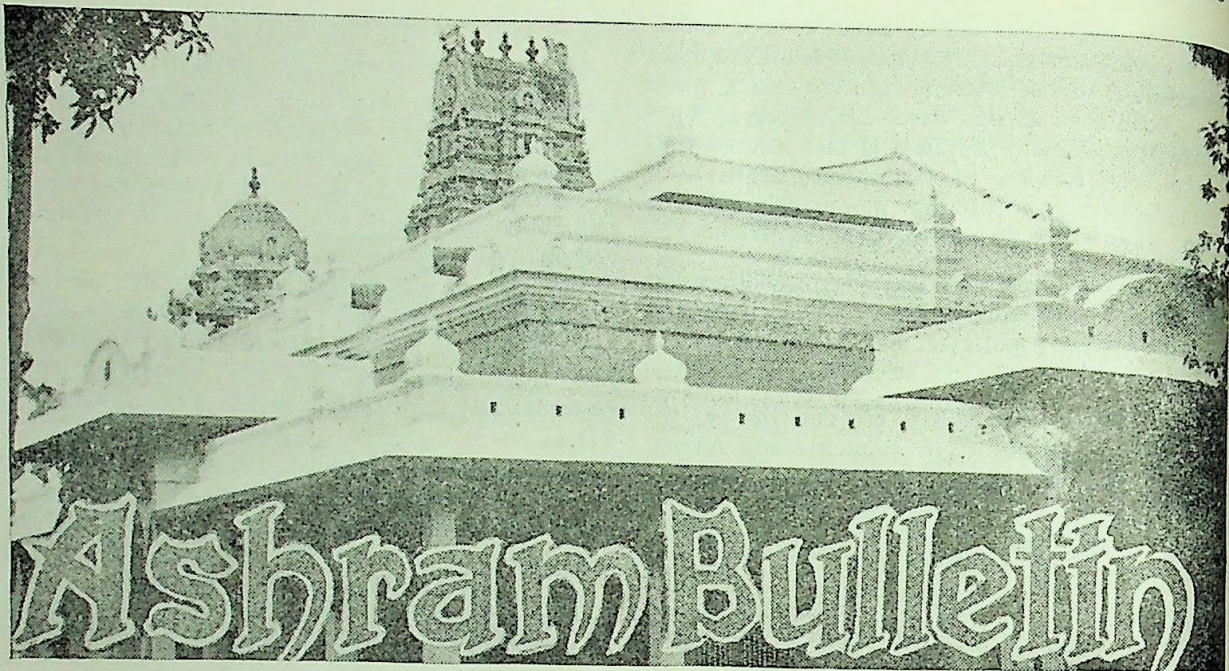
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RAMANA JAYANTHI

AT HIS SHRINE OF GRACE

THE 88th Jayanthi or birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on the 19th of December. The celebrations began with special chanting of Upanishads by a number of Brahmins and *Laksharchana* or worship at Bhagavan's shrine with the repetition of the thousand names of Bhagavan. These were followed by elaborate puja or ceremonial worship. The entire proceedings were watched by a large concourse of devotees who had come from far and near.

This was the first time after several years that the celebrations were conducted at the original shrine. The large pavillions put up in front of the shrine at the time of the Kumbhabhishekam afforded excellent shelter to the devotees all of whom could conveniently sit and watch the waving of the lights, etc.

In the afternoon, Bangalore Sri Krishna Bhagavathar gave a *harikatha* on 'Sri Ramana Vijayam', with his inimitable admixture of humour and emotional outbursts. Sri Om Sadhu with his party conducted bhajan for an hour before the evening puja. After dinner, at the request of the devotees, the cinema film of Sri Bhagavan was screened. Then Brahma Sri Jaga-

deesa Iyer and party gave a divyanama sankeertana bhajan which lasted till late in the night.

A special feature of the whole function was that one and all assembled experienced the Living Presence of Sri Bhagavan throughout.

A feast was arranged for them as usual. A large number of poor persons were also fed.

KARTHIKAI DEEPAM

The annual Deepam festival of the temple of Arunachala was celebrated for ten days from the 4th of December. The Deepam or the Holy Beacon was lit on top of the Hill Arunachala at dusk on the tenth day, but to the disappointment of thousands of devotees who were eagerly waiting to catch the first glimpse of the sacred flame, dense clouds hid the entire top of the Hill. However after about half an hour a few glimpses of the flame were caught through the clouds by the devotees of Bhagavan who had assembled in the quadrangle of the Ashram according to the custom observed in Bhagavan's life time. An unusually large number of devotees came to the Ashram in connection with the festival. In the night, as usual, most of the devotees went round the Hill.

HOMAGE FROM A SILENT DEVOTEE

For the completion of the 60th year of the ascension of H. H. Sri Kamakoti Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Kanchi to the *peetham*, Sri Framji Dorabji was invited to make a short speech on 'The Jagadguru', which he has sent to us for insertion in *The Mountain Path*.

Sri Framji is one of the seniormost and most devoted of the followers of Sri Bhagavan and we should long ago have introduced him to our readers but for his fixed opposition to any kind of publicity. We now gladly extend what recognition we can by publishing this short speech!—

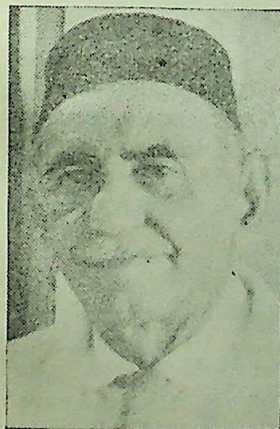
It is very difficult for me to write or speak about a Jagadguru; but I would like to quote what other great saints have said.

Kabir says: 'The Jagadguru is the only Guru who brings peace and prosperity to the whole world'. Another Marathi saint has said: 'For the good and betterment of human beings they sacrifice themselves and do good to mankind'.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana says: 'The Sage is characterised by eternal and intense activity. His stillness is like the apparent stillness of a fast rotating top. Its very speed cannot be followed by the eye and so it appears to be still. So is the apparent inaction of the Sage. These

must be explained because the people generally mistake his stillness to be inertness. It is not so. There is no activity under the sun which is more intense than that of a Jnani.'

The Bhagavad Gita has gone a step further and says: 'If the splendour of thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky that might resemble the glory of that Mahatma'.



Framji Dorabji

When all this has been said in their praise, who am I to say any more?

My only prayer this day is like Saint Tukaram's who said: 'Oh Master! I do not wish to have any thing, let me be under your feet where there is all happiness.'

Jai Shankara!

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MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

Our next issue will again be about SACRED POETRY, but this time to redress the balance, NON-HINDU.

After that we are bringing to an end our series of issues devoted to particular subjects. They could not go on indefinitely, as it would have meant taking up less important themes while neglecting basic ones to which an issue had already been devoted but about which much more remained to be said. For instance, whole volumes could be and have been written about the single subject of symbolism. Nevertheless, it was considered a good thing

to start the life of *The Mountain Path* by dealing in a more comprehensive way with some of the basic problems which arise, such as predestination or reincarnation or symbolism.

Our change of style does not mean that future issues of *The Mountain Path* will be just a haphazard jumble, bundling together whatever happens to arrive in the post. It has been possible to build up a certain reserve, and with the help of this and of articles in series we hope to make an aesthetically arranged bouquet of each issue. In order to do so we have to make a twofold appeal to contributors: on the one hand to keep us plentifully supplied with material and on the other to bear with us patiently if some of the material accepted is kept pending for a while before being used.

Pausing at this milestone on our path to look back, we see that no single issue has yet appeared which has not brought us a number of new contributors, while on the other hand we have been able to build up a staunch following of

1 We are glad to inform the readers that Sri Framji will be introduced in our next issue of April '68 — Editor.

regulars such as Wei Wu Wei, Cornelia Bagarotti, Gladys de Meuter, Prof. Kulkarni and all those others whom we apologize for not mentioning by name. While the former illustrate the fecundity of our journal, the latter show its stability. We are confident that both will continue.

POSTAL SERVICE

Under the heading 'postal disservice' we had to complain in our issue of January, 1966 that the postal authorities had suddenly and for no known reason cancelled the facilities for an Ashram postal delivery service which we had enjoyed ever since Bhagavan presided over the opening of our branch post office as far back as 1937. We are now glad to be able to say that this facility has been restored. The Ashram office and *The Mountain Path* had been put to much inconvenience by the withdrawal of the facility and we congratulate and thank the postal authorities for restoring it to us.

RAMANA KENDRA

The Ramana Kendra, Delhi, we are glad to say, has now taken up their development project earnestly. As a first step to collect funds towards the cost of the premises acquired and a building over it, they want to bring out a SOUVENIR, dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. In addition to original articles by eminent scholars, selected portions from articles in *The Mountain Path*, are also to be published. Prof. K. Swaminathan, who is the spirit behind this, has formed a Committee, the office-bearers of which are: Sri K. M. Munshi, Chairman, Sri Kaka Saheb Kalelkar, Prof. M. Yamunacharya, Sri K. Swaminathan, Secretary, Sri M. S. K. Sastri, Treasurer. The Souvenir Committee appeals to philanthropists and industrialists to book advertisements in the Souvenir. While we wish them all success and offer our sincere good wishes and co-operation, we advise readers interested to obtain further details from Sri K. Swaminathan, Level 5, East Block IV, Ramakrishnapuram, New Delhi-22.

PILGRIMS

Two devotees from abroad, who after strenuous efforts over the years have succeeded at last in coming to the Ashram, are Mr. Horst Rutkowski and Mr. Vaclav Cech. They will be staying for a few months, doing sadhana. Mrs. Lucy Cornelissen, our staunch devotee and the German writer, is back again here and will be staying for good.

In the last issue our ever growing list of life members of the Ashram and life subscribers to *The Mountain Path* got transferred to July. Since there is apt to be greater pressure on space in our January issue, we have decided to leave it there.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

NEW ADDITIONS

The Credibility of Divine Existence: The Collected Papers of Norman Kemp Smith, Edited by A. J. D. Porteous, R. D. MacLennan and G. E. Davie

Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective: A cross Disciplinary Approach, Edited by J. Clayton Feaver and William Horosz

✓ *Sri Aurobindo on the Tantra*, Compiled by M. P. Pandit

The Eternal Verities by Frank Lester

Space, Time and Karma by Keshavamurti

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi by R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao

The Secularisation of Modern Cultures by Bernard E. Meland

Bright Pathway to God by Visnu Dass

Life Sketch of Pujya Narayanaswami by Sudha Rathi

Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study Vol. I

Treasury of Thought by Dagobert D. Runes

Islam the Misunderstood Religion by Muhammad Qutb

The Tarjuman al-Quran by Abul Kalam Azad. Edited and Rendered into English by Syed Abdul Latif

Radhakrishnan—The Portrait of an Educationist by R. P. Singh

Temples and Legends of Bengal by P. C. Choudhury

All India Colloquium on Ethical and Spiritual Values as the basis of National Integration—December 30, 1966 to January 2, 1967—Record of Proceedings

✓ *Sri Krishna and His Gospel* by Shuddhananda Bharati

Sadhana—Spotlight by a Saint by M. M. Varma
Thoughts on Islam and other Subjects by Haji Ahmed Ali

Life in Verse by Haji Ahmed Ali

Ramayana Samiksha by E. C. R. Sreekrishna Sarma

Sankaradeva and His Times by Maheswar Neog

- Life and Philosophy of Shree Swaminarayan* by H. T. Dave
The Practical Approach to Divinity by Chandra Swami
Pictures of a Pilgrim of Peace by C. P. M. Abeyesekera and H. L. D. Mahindapala
- Meditation* by Mouni Sadhu
The Symphony of Life by B. Natesan
Prophet of Indian Nationalism by Karan Singh
Holy Commandments of Hazrat Mehboob-i-Ilahi by Kwaja Nizam-uddin Aulia
The Magnificent Defeat by Frederick Buechner

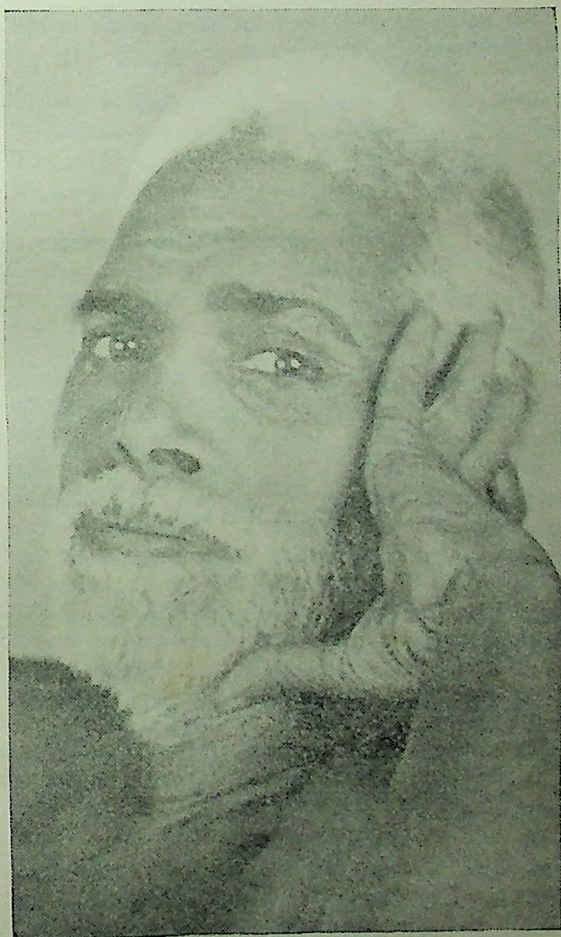
INTRODUCING

R. NARAYANA IYER

SRI R. NARAYANA IYER, an old devotee, a retired Sub-Registrar, is one of the seniormost devotees of Sri Bhagavan and one who enjoyed some special privileges. Soon after he came to Sri Bhagavan he began to move with him more like a resident of the Ashram, than a casual visitor. He was an out and out sceptic with ultra modern views and ways, but very soon he became a staunch follower and devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He describes this change fully in his narrative of how he came to the Maharshi which will be published in a later issue of *The Mountain Path*.

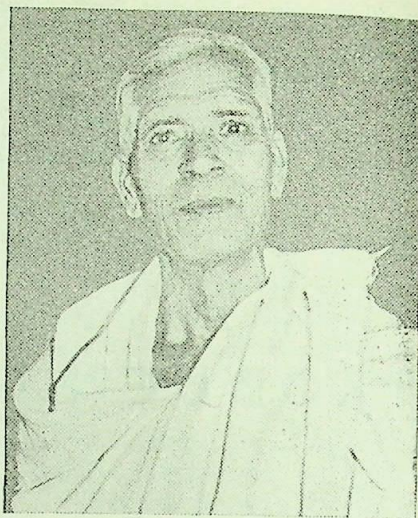
The familiarity and freedom with which he moved with Sri Bhagavan can be understood from the fact that he was chiefly responsible for eliciting a good deal of information about the family in Tiruchuzhi, their financial difficulties which necessitated borrowings and alienation of family properties. He also assisted the Ashram management to redeem these properties and to preserve them as sacred monuments at Bhagavan's birth-place and the place of his education under the names of *Sundara Mandiram* and *Ramana Mandiram*. He likewise played a prominent part in the execution of the Will of Sri Bhagavan—a document about the propriety of which later on there was a good deal of controversy.

There were occasions on which Sri Bhagavan took special notice of him, for instance, when a cinema picture was about to be shown in the dining hall at 5 p.m., Bhagavan declined to go there till Sri Narayana Iyer, who was expected at 7 p.m., arrived consequently a large number of people who had gathered in the hall had to wait for a long time. There were other instances



also. Though deeply involved in the affairs of the Ashram and having different views he continues to visit the Ashram regularly and is well-known to one and all.

His article, *Divine Glimpses* under the pseudonym 'Vishnu' was published in our Jayanthi Number of January, 1966. Some of his reminiscences will also be found in the *Ramana Pictorial Souvenir*, published in commemoration of the Kumbhabhishekam of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace. It was he who asked for a clarification of the state of a family man who follows the path of jnana, and to whom Sri Bhagavan said: "Remaining as a family man you can certainly engage in spiritual practice. Even better than the man who thinks 'I have renounced everything' is one who does his duty but does not think 'I do this' or 'I am the doer'. A sannyasi, who thinks 'I am a sannyasi' cannot be a true sannyasi, whereas a householder who does not think 'I am a householder' is truly a sannyasi."



Narayana Iyer

Sri Narayana Iyer was the first person to construct a house in Ramana Nagar colony. He still lives here and narrates, to those who seek, the Grace, Love and Splendour of Sri Bhagavan.

Motionless did the Supreme Spirit vibrate alone in its own glory. Beyond that nothing did exist. Creative then became the glory with self-sustaining principle below and creative energy above.

— *Rig Veda.*

* * * *

The One Reality cannot even be said that It is one. For how can there be a second other than that? There is neither absoluteness, nor non-absoluteness, neither non-entity nor entity, for the Reality is absolutely non-dual. How, then, can I describe That which is the goal of the highest knowledge?

— *Sri Shankara.*

* * * *

All this, whatsoever moves in the Universe, is to be enveloped in the Self.

— *Isa Upanishad.*

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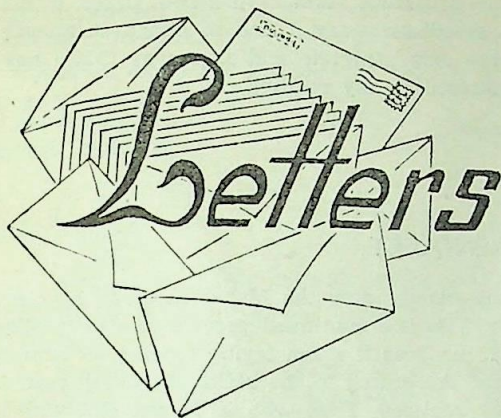
He sees the Self in his own body, he sees all as the Self. Evil does not overtake him; but he transcends all evil. Evil does not trouble him; he consumes all evil.

— *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*

* * * *

Verily, he becomes Brahman who realises Brahman. He overcomes evil and transcends grief. Being free from all knots of the heart, he attains to immortality.

— *Mundaka Upanishad.*



to the EDITOR

KRISHNA, TEACHER OF DHARMA

More than anything else, I was thrilled to read in the October *Mountain Path* your article 'Krishna, Teacher of Dharma'. As you know, there is a lot of misunderstanding on this subject. There are various interpretations. 1. Our Bhagavatas are never tired of expatiating on the ingenuity of Krishna in his dubious dealings with the Kaurava leaders. 2. The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Shastri, from the way he dealt with the Rama-Vali episode, would perhaps argue that Krishna was not above the weaknesses and errors of mankind, thus denying his divine personality. 3. Prof. Lal of Calcutta University is of the opinion that the keynote of the Mahabharata is expediency, doing things as politicians do, to serve the time and occasion. 4. It is refreshing to see your sane and correct interpretation of the Mahabharata episodes. I am happy to have read it and thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so.

B. NATESAN,
Calcutta.

VALMIKI RAMAYANA

In the issue of *Mountain Path* of July 67, there is a query about destiny in Valmiki Ramayana, and your reply thereto (page 260). I would invite you to go through *sargas* 22-24 of the Ayodhya Kanda. Rama emphasises that destiny alone is responsible for all that happens and Lakshmana, impulsive as he is, rails against Rama, saying that only cowards believe in destiny. But Rama finally sticks to his resolve about obeying his father and Lakshmana cools down and seeks his brother's permission to accompany him to the forest. Rama's view about destiny as enunciated by Valmiki is thus quite clear. Sita's view is also the same e.g., Sundarakanda, 37-3. Your expla-

nation therefore seems to be merely ad hoc arising directly from the quotation casually sprung upon you by the letter-writer.

T. S. SANKARAN,
Mylapore, Madras.

My explanation was indeed ad hoc, provoked by the suggestion that Valmiki Ramayana was not reliable. I am grateful to Mr. Sankaran for his fuller comment.

EDITOR.

I would like to say how much I like the July 1967 issue of the *Mountain Path*. It is good to have an appreciation in one issue of the elements of so many different yoga paths and to have it stated so definitely what yoga is and what it is not.

It has helped me to make up my mind and led me to one definite conclusion, however: Yoga is not for me. I would go further than that and say that Yoga is not for most people. If yoga is not for those who have family responsibilities, who is it for? I would guess that of the people of Europe and America perhaps one in ten thousand would consider seeking the higher spiritual states. The proportion in India may be higher.

Do you consider that the time will come when more people are interested in the religious life? Will there then be more husbands leaving their homes and wives to obtain solitude? Will there then be fewer people marrying and having children? Or is it likely that yoga will always be only for the few and that the majority will always be there to make families and live in society?

What have the Hindu scriptures to say to this majority of the people, who will always have family responsibilities and be unable to follow yoga very far?

MURDOCH KIRBY,
Isle of Wight, England.

You are confusing two issues: the general possibility of following a spiritual path and the technical possibility of following a yogic path. It has been pointed out on a number of occasions in THE MOUNTAIN PATH that a technically yogic path is not only unnecessary but was not even advocated by the Maharshi. He preferred people to follow a spiritual path invisibly in the life of the world. The conclusion to be drawn from the technical difficulties may indeed be that "yoga is not for me", but with the corollary that one should give up playing about at it and turn instead to some spiritual path that one is in a position to follow seriously. The question how many people will do so does not arise, because the fundamental question is always whether you will.

EDITOR.

GASPING

When I sit in meditation focusing the mind on the right side of the chest and asking 'Who am I?' choking of breath ensues. I conclude that that may be due to emotions. What should I do about it?

MRUTHYUNJAYA,
Davangere.

Bhagavan explained that thought and breathing are connected and rise from the same source, so if you stop one the other also stops. Sometimes in meditation the breathing slows down or even stops and the mind may notice that it has stopped and start it up again with a sudden shock or even a feeling of fear. It is best to pay as little attention to this as possible. Don't try to systematise it. When it happens just resume calm, gentle breathing until it becomes normal again.

EDITOR.

It is so kind of you to have responded so promptly to the need of a sadhaka. Your kind suggestion is so apt and precise, as if it came by thought-reading. The wonder is that the same suggestion which you gave me in your letter arose spontaneously in my mind about four days back and I put it into practice and in the meanwhile your letter arrived. It is all Bhagavan's Grace.

MRUTHYUNJAYA.

THE ONLY WAY

For several years now I have read everything I could lay my hands on concerning Sri Bhagavan and each morning I open at random the large

volume of 'Talks' and read a few pages at random. Needless to say, I find in Bhagavan's teachings the only complete and clear way that I have encountered in my reading.

LOCKE RUSH,
Tokyo, Japan.

SELF-ENQUIRY

What exactly does the Maharshi mean by Self-enquiry? Is it a continued process of asking 'Who am I?' or does it mean trying to give an answer as well? According to the Maharshi, every man is already realized. Then who is to ask and who is to answer? Is there a non-Self which shrouds the eternal Self? If so can the eternal Self free itself by merely asking about its identity with itself?

BIJAYA K. MISRA,
Cuttack.

You have to be very careful not to get tangled up in such questions. The Maharshi did not say that "every man is already Realized", because "every" presumes multiplicity while "Realized" presumes universality. He might have said "You are already Realized", but then you have to understand who is the "you" to whom this applies and who is the illusory or imagined "you" to whom it does not apply. That is Self-enquiry.

EDITOR.

HOW MANY OF ME?

Sri Ramana Maharshi discourages mere reading of learned books. How then does 'The Mountain Path' justify its existence?.....I hope to purify my mind by inspirational writings like your editorials. I read your last editorial and your article on Sri Krishna with great delight. Your reply to Gordon Green confirmed my feeling in the matter. I read in the October issue that there is a possibility of your editorials being published in book form, possibly along with other important articles. I am one of those who are eagerly awaiting such a publication.

May I ask if you recognize two egos, one absolute and admirable and desirable and the other limited and undesirable?

S. K. PHADKE,
Bombay.

You have answered the question about writing THE MOUNTAIN PATH yourself. If writings are found inspirational they are not merely learned and can be helpful.

If the editorials or other articles are published separately in book form it will not be yet awhile.

Questions about the ego and the self are a trap. Try to remember that there just is.

EDITOR.

THE HEART

1. I wish to obtain annual bound copies of *The Mountain Path*. From what year are they obtainable?

2. Under question 9, chapter 11 of 'Spiritual Instruction' the Heart is described as "...inverted, and in it there is a tiny orifice wherein is firmly seated along with desires (tendencies) etc. an immense darkness. Thereon the entire nervous system has its support. It is the seat of the vital forces, the mind and the light (of consciousness)." Does this refer to the gall bladder?

RICHARD E. YAP,
Malaysia.

1. There are still a few bound volumes of *THE MOUNTAIN PATH* available for the years 1966 and 1967. Only those for 1964 and 1965 are completely out of stock.

2. The centres referred to in such texts are not physical organs. On the other hand they are also not imaginary. They can best be described as 'subtle centres'.

EDITOR.

ANIMAL CITIZEN

I read with interest what M. D. Sagane had to say about his dog under the caption 'A dog meditates' in your October issue, because it brings up questions which have often puzzled me.

What exactly is the position of the animal in the divine scheme of things? I have heard a religious teacher say that animals have no souls. Personally I do not agree with this. If the animal has a soul, what is the difference between its soul and that of a man? When an animal indulges in cruel or brutal acts is it committing 'sin' in the generally accepted sense of the term? There are people who love their animal pets deeply that they place them on a par with human beings. Are they right to do this?

If we believe in reincarnation we may hold that an animal can one day be reincarnated as a man. Does the way an animal lives help it to move in this direction? Does the animal understand the ideal of God? Is it capable of a mystical experi-

ence? These are a few of the questions that have puzzled me.

MRS. BHIM KRISHNAMMA,
Secunderabad.

Before asking whether an animal has a soul or understands the idea of God it might be best to make sure what one means by 'soul' and 'God'. Certainly an animal has consciousness and can respond to a spiritual influence. It can feel devotion, anger, gratitude and a sense of duty. Bhagavan showed clearly both by precept and practice that we can help animals in their development and have a responsibility to do so. That would also imply that we have culpability for not doing so when the opportunity to do so comes our way.

EDITOR.

JUDGE NOT—I

Immediately on receipt of *The Mountain Path* every quarter I first read your expert and brilliant editorial and then go through the last pages with eagerness to see the 'Letters to the Editor' and your clear replies thereto.

This time I myself wish to refer to your editorial Oct. 1967 called 'Quest and Egoism' and to ask you whether there is any way to distinguish between the two types of aspirant you mention there:

1. those whose vasanas or latent tendencies are being brought to the surface only to be expelled and leave them in peace, even though causing a lot of inconvenience to themselves and others in the process.

2. those who have fallen on the way in their sadhana, tripped up by mundane luxuries or by arrogance or in some way deluded and are in a worse state than before.

H. A. SHANKARANARAYAN,
Coimbatore.

There is no easy way to distinguish. That is why one is always urged not to judge others but to concentrate on removing one's own imperfections.

There is, however, the consolation of Sri Krishna's assurance in the Bhagavad Gita that even those who fail in their quest are not lost but are brought back in circumstances favourable for renewed effort in their next birth. (Ch. VI, v. 37-45.)

EDITOR.

JUDGE NOT—2

1. Let me congratulate you on your poem 'The Voice of the Ego' and G. N. Daley for 'In Brief', appearing respectively in the October and January issues of *The Mountain Path*. Both have succeeded in putting the whole sadhana in brief.

2. If one who has received Bhagavan's initiation and Grace may succumb to the lurking ego what is the difference between him and one who has not?

AMARENDRAVIJAYAJI,
Dharmaj.

When Christ said that many are called but few are chosen he implied that being called is no guarantee of being chosen. But one is apt to be too impatient and attach too much importance to this lifetime. In the Bhagavad Gita, ch. VI, vv. 40-45 Sri Krishna reassures Arjuna that one who has striven on the path in this lifetime but fallen from it is reborn in favourable conditions for further effort in his next lifetime and carried forward by the momentum of his past practice.

EDITOR.

RITUAL (Continued III)

I wish to add whatever I may know on the above subject as the result of my long residence at the Ashram, especially in view of my personal connection with the two devotees concerned. Bhagavan's rule was that in making arrangements for guests dining there the Ashram should see to it that people who ordinarily observe caste are not forced to give it up at the Ashram. It was particularly true with him that circumstances alter cases, and the following incident, which occurred in my presence, illustrates this. A young man came to the Ashram with Dr. Srinivasa Rao, retired D. M. O., and while the doctor went and sat inside the young man came and sat in the general section. The Sarvadhikari came after him and ordered him to go and sit in the Brahmin section. The young man started to argue but Bhagavan took the side of the Sarvadhikari, saying sarcastically to the young man: "Yes, of course, you know everything. Go and sit inside!" And he went as ordered.

Dr. Rao was a long-standing devotee and frequent visitor and the young man was a close relative of his, and this may be why the Sarvadhikari intervened and Bhagavan supported him.

DEVARAJA MUDALIAR,
Kancheepuram

This letter from one of our seniormost devotees will remove the need for further controversy. It will be seen that it is substantially in agreement with our previous reply.

EDITOR.

RECOGNITION

I am very glad to have received 'Guru Ramana' and the October *Mountain Path*. I feel that Sri Bhagavan has drenched me with his blessings. These works are not revealing something new to me but I feel that I am rediscovering myself. It is more than rewarding to be fortunate enough to have contact with the Ashram. Though physically miles away, I feel from the very core of my heart some out-flowing fountain of divine bliss that makes me humble and meek.

I should like to pay my fervent compliments to you personally for your scholarly craftsmanship in wielding your powerful pen in projecting the teachings of Sri Bhagavan. I should feel highly obliged for permission to borrow and translate some of the articles. Of course, all such articles will contain due acknowledgement to the author and *The Mountain Path*.

Once again offering you my highest respects and rededicating myself whole-heartedly to the service of Lord Bhagavan.

DHARM PAUL,
New Delhi.

It is a frequent phenomenon that when some one comes in contact with the Truth he feels that it is not anything new but something that he always knew but had forgotten that he knew.

Any one is permitted to reproduce items from THE MOUNTAIN PATH provided due acknowledgement is made.

EDITOR.

Whatever exists in this universe vibrates within the Prana.

—Kathopanishad.

Fiery Gem, shining in all
directions, do Thou burn
up my dross, Oh Aruna-
chala !

— *The Marital Garland
of Letters*, verse 18

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala ! Thou dost root out the ego of those who
meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala !"

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

Vol. V

APRIL 1968

No. 2

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verse in Telugu and Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Bhagavan's own handwriting.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Words

2. தானுண்டி தானுங் தன்னுதா நன்னெவ,
தேனுண்டு ஸ்ளீசு மெதியுநு — வானி
நன்னெவ, இக்கூடு நன்னுந் நன்னுமது
பானுலி யிடு பிலகூ.

2. தானிருந்துந் தானாகத் தன்னேத்தா அனெவன்
யானிருக்குந் தான மெதுவெனக்கேட் — பாது-
யானெவ னெவ்விடம் யானுள னென்றமது
பானனை யீடு பகர்.

2. One who asks himself 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I?', though existing all the while as the Self, is like a drunken man who enquires about his own identity and whereabouts.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI



The aim of this journal is to
north and south of the country
religions and all the people
to be addressed to the
to be addressed to the
to be addressed to the

THE HINDU

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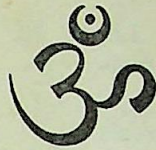
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One who asks himself 'Who am I, and 'Where
am I, though existing all the while as the Self,
like a drunken man who enquires about his own
position and whereabouts

—BRODIE, Sri RAMANA MAHARISHI







THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. V

APRIL, 1968

No. 2

SACRED POETRY-2

Editorial

SACRED poetry was the subject of the January 1968 issue of *The Mountain Path*. Its editorial covers therefore also the present issue which deals with a parallel subject. In worldly poetry the poet's mind becomes pregnant with some intuitional feeling or understanding and this churns him up in such a way that his language becomes rhyth-mical and he utters forth an indication though never an exact account of what had moved him. In sacred poetry the poet-saint becomes a recipient, an in-strument through which flow utterances of Truth of sub-lime beauty and purity. He does not have to fumble for words ; they pour like a cascade from his heart. A simple line has the power to move those who understand to tears.

The Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala are a supreme example of it. Walking round the Hill, tears flowing from His eyes, Ramana Maharshi wrote it as it came to Him. Once

one of the devotees asked for help by writ-ing out some slokas from The Five Hymns and showing Him. How He understood ! The smile and reassuring look from those luminous eyes full of Grace were sufficient reply. Who wrote those words ? They come from our hearts. Did He write them for us identifying Himself with our struggles, He the Self, the living inner Guru then and now ?



17. (Unmoving) Hill, melting into a Sea of Grace, have mercy, I pray. O Aruna-chala !
18. Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, burn up my dross, O Arunachala !
11. Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me, art Thou not still in my heart, O Arunachala ?
27. Dazzling Sun that swallowest up all the universe in Thy light, open the lotus of my heart, I pray, O Aruna-chala !

31. There (in the heart) rest quiet! Let the seas of joy surge, speech and feeling cease, O Arunachala!
35. If spurned by Thee, alas! What rests for me but the torment of my *prarabdha*? What hope is left for me, O Arunachala!
49. Treasure of benign and holy Grace, found without seeking, steady my wandering mind, O Arunachala!
51. Unless thou extend Thy hand of Grace in mercy and embrace me, I am lost, O Arunachala!
53. Loveless though I be clothe me with Thy Grace and then regard me, O Arunachala!
57. When will waves of thought cease to rise? When shall I reach Thee, subtler than the ether, O Arunachala!

78. Guard me lest I flounder storm-tossed like a ship without helmsman, O Arunachala!

Also the following from the *Necklet of Nine Gems*

- ...O Love in the shape of Arunachala! how can the lotus blossom without sight of the sun? Thou art the Sun of suns; Thou causest Grace to well up and pour forth as a stream!!.....
- O Transcendent!!..... Ordain Thou that my burden be transferred to Thee and my free will effaced, for what indeed can be a burden to the Sustainer Lord Supreme! I have had enough of carrying the burden of this world upon my head, parted from Thee, Arunachala, the Supreme Himself!.....

No form He has, no name, no quality;
 Still there beside the Holy Hill He dwells
 In human form, known by the comely name
 Of Ramana, marked by the primal power
 Of love; with moist eyes showering grace for all
 To see; the ethereal Being whose brightness burns
 To I-less nothingness obnoxious me.

—From Sri Muruganar's *Ramana Deva Malai*, v. 180.



THE POET'S VISION

By

Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

AS I stood on the green lawn of the Palace of the Legion of Honour in San Francisco admiring the statue of the Thinker by Rodin, a young friend asked me the question, "What do you think the Thinker is thinking?"

"How to stop thinking," I ventured to reply.

In the expressive words of a Sanskrit doggerel, the mind may be compared in its restlessness to a monkey that is drunk, stung by a scorpion, and possessed by a ghost, all at the same time. It is the nature of the mind to be restless, and if only we can bring this furious factory to a complete standstill, the Scriptures tell us that we pass here and now into a higher state of consciousness.

When my mind is stilled, my self-will is extinguished. I am no longer a separate fragment in a world of millions of separate fragments; I am not a bubble but have become the sea. In the poetic words of the Upanishads, "As when the drum is beaten, its various particular notes are not heard apart from the whole, but in the total sound all its notes are heard; as when the conch-shell is blown, its various particular notes are not heard apart from the whole, but in the total sound all its notes are heard—so, through the knowledge of the Self, Pure Intelligence, all things and beings are known. There is no existence apart from the Self."

This Self is called God—Sat, Chit, Ananda—Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Joy. Francis Thompson calls Him the hound of Heaven who is always on our trail. We may try our hardest to shake Him off by hiding ourselves in pleasure and profit, prestige and power, by running away as fast as we can from those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

"But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
'All things betray thee, who betrayest
Me.'"

When we try to find our centre of gravity outside ourselves, when we seek the Kingdom of Heaven without, we are moving in a world of duality, of pleasure and pain, success and failure, birth and death. But our deep driving need is not for five minutes or five hours of pleasure, not for a nickel's or dime's worth of security, not for a few years or decades more of life. Our deep driving need is for abiding joy, complete security, unending life. "There is no joy in the finite," declare the Upanishads. "There is joy only in the Infinite." There is no immortality in the finite, there is immortality only in the Infinite.

When we love the finite things of the world, go after money or material possessions, pleasure or power, we are running away from our real need and running into frustration, insecurity and ephemeral existence. On the other hand, when we seek the Kingdom of Heaven within, turn our face to the Lord of Love who is enshrined in our heart of hearts, we are turning our back upon frustration, insecurity, ephemeral existence. As Jesus said unto Peter and the other disciples, "But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Our treasure is usually in a hundred places; the bank, the stock exchange, the company president's chair, the man of the year award; and our heart, too, therefore, is in a hundred places. Two months ago I saw an exhibition of the paintings of the Belgian surrealist Magritte who brings out in a masterly fashion what happens to us when we follow a sense craving. I am referring to a still life study in which we see on a table an empty bottle, a glass and a plate with a round piece of ham on it. Right at the centre of the ham is depicted a human eye that has trapped itself there through its greed and gluttony.

Every time we yield to a sense craving, we have lost a little bit of our heart, a little bit of our capacity to desire which is the same as our capacity to love. Living as most of us are in the midst of a widespread network of mass communication media — television, radio, movies, magazine, newspaper — it is almost impossible to escape their siren song to seduce us to yield to the clamour of the senses, to place our centre of gravity in the changing without. Rise above it, and we find our centre in the changeless within. As the Bhagavad Gita points out,

"The winds turn a ship
From its course upon the waters :
The wandering winds of the senses
Cast man's mind adrift
And turn his better judgment from its
course."

The practice of meditation enables us to develop the discrimination and the will to control the senses, and the practice of sense-control helps to deepen our meditation. Significantly enough, when we indulge the senses without discrimination, we are letting our Prana or vital energy ebb out; when we restrain the senses with discrimination, we are contributing to our physical and mental health. It is said in the Svetasvatara Upanishad: "The first signs of progress on the path of yoga are health, a sense of physical lightness, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice, an agreeable odour of the person, and freedom from craving." Thus when we seek the Kingdom of God that lies within,

the first benefits we receive are on the physical level, improving health and increasing energy.

As long as we are driven by sense craving, it is not possible for us to enjoy fully the beauty of the external world or derive from it the maximum benefit it can give us. In fact, we do not even perceive the world clearly or 'correctly' as long as we continue to look at it through the distorting medium of our sense cravings and selfish urges. It is when we have subdued our sense cravings and selfish urges that we are able to see the world as Reality. In the words of the Renaissance English mystic Thomas Traherne, "But all things abide eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifested in the light of the day and something infinite behind everything appeared; which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins and ruddy faces. The skies were mine, and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the world was mine; and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it."

As we are enabled through the practice of meditation to find our centre of gravity within our own consciousness rather than in the flux of the world without, profound peace and deep security become our permanent possessions. No longer are we engaged in the futile task of extracting the last ounce of love that we can from everybody around us, but we now find ourselves immersed in the fruitful mission of giving rather than receiving, of loving those around us — father, mother, husband, wife, children, friends — much more than we love ourselves. This is the way to love the Lord — call him Christ, call him Krishna — who is enthroned in the consciousness of everyone, and this is, of course, the way to have a happy family, a happy community, a happy country, a happy world. "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs

of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss ; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint ; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven ; the same loveth little.'"

Through the systematic practice of meditation we can develop a higher mode of knowing which rises above the duality of subject and object. It is beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect, and may be called the superconscious or the transcendental or the opening of the divine eye, as the Bhagavad Gita puts it. Through this direct, intuitive mode of knowing we are able to jump out of our skin, as it were, to become united in some measure with the object of our knowledge. This is the secret of all great scientific discovery and of all great artistic creation too. Albert Einstein has said : "The most beautiful and the most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is Impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms — this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre of true religiousness."

Almost all of us have part of our vital energy trapped either in the past — in memories, regrets, remorse — or in the future — in hopes, fears, expectations. When we have only a very small part of our vital capital with which to live in the present, how can we give of our best, how can we live on the highest level of consciousness possible for us ? One of the most enriching developments on the path of Meditation is our increasing capacity to recall our vital energy from the nostalgic memories or vain regrets of the past, and from the tense expectation or dark apprehension of the future. This enables us to live entirely in the present, in the here and now, with all our vital forces unified in our hands, and able to meet the

challenge of life with calmness, courage and compassion. When we are able to face sorrow calmly, courageously and compassionately, say the illumined men and women, there is no more reason, no more need for sorrow to come into our life. "Yoga is the breaking of contact with pain," declares Sri Krishna in the Bhagvad Gita.

In the stupendous spiritual climax called Samadhi, we are freed from the tyranny of the past and the future ; we are delivered from time into the Eternal Now. Sings the Sufi mystic Jalaluddin Rumi in one of his inspired songs :

"Past and future veil God from our sight ;
Burn up both of them with fire. How long
Wilt thou be partitioned by these
segments, like a reed ?
So long as a reed is partitioned, it is
not privy to secrets,
Nor is it vocal in response to lip and
breathing."

The mind moves in time, but the Atman, the Self, the Christ within, is beyond time. When we are enabled in Samadhi to go beyond the mind we go beyond time, beyond change, beyond the last change called death to reach a higher state of consciousness which is immortal and infinite.

The evidence of Samadhi is in the complete transformation of character, conduct and consciousness. "Ye shall judge the tree by the fruit thereof." We are no longer I-minded. We have become Christ-conscious. St. Augustine describes the life of the Christ-conscious in beautiful language : "Temperance is love surrendering itself wholly to Him who is its object ; courage is love bearing all things gladly for the sake of Him who is its object ; justice is love serving only Him who is its object, and therefore rightly ruling ; prudence is love making wise distinctions between what hinders and what helps itself."

May the Lord grant us temperance to surrender our love wholly to Him, courage to bear all things gladly for the sake of Him, justice to serve only Him, and Prudence to make wise distinctions between what hinders and what helps us in becoming one with Him !

SOLOMON'S CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

By
GLADYS DE MEUTER

Thy Statutes have been my Songs in the House of my pilgrimage.'

(Ps. cxix.54).

THE meditative soul engaged in sweet communion with the divine Presence, sings a unique love-long which has been handed down through the ages as the Song of Songs.

Solomon or Jedidiah whose name signifies 'Beloved of the Lord' is regarded as the author of this superlative work which was strongly defended by the Rabbi Aquiba at the Synod of Jamnia around 90 A.D. In the Mishnah (Yadayim iii. 5) we read the words spoken by Aqiba: 'Great indeed was the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel. All the Kethubim are sacred, but holiest of all is the Song of Songs.'

Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, considered the work to be 'a sublime and sacred discourse which is to be heard by those ears and hearts which have been purified, for unless discipline has been imposed upon the flesh so that the spiritual is master, the heart being impure is not worthy of perusing the holy Canticle. Just as clear light falls in vain on blind eyes or upon closed eyelids, so the natural man fails to absorb the things of the spirit of God.'

Those who do not perceive the golden light of mysticism which illumines the Love-Poem, are unable to pierce the shadow earthly-love in order to apprehend the heavenly Love truly portrayed in the Song of Songs.

Origen understood the Shulamite bride to be the soul, and her Beloved the divine Logos. Origen taught that when the soul turns her gaze from the transitoriness of worldly things to seek her true love, then the Word of God moved by compassion comes to the yearning soul and makes His abode in her heart, as Christ the 'Living One' promised in John xiv. 23.

The Canticle of Canticles has inspired the noblest minds and stirred the purest hearts with its mystical song, among them — Chrysostom, Eusebius of Caesarea, Diadorus of Tarsus, Theodoret, Cyprian of Carthage, Basil the Great, the two Gregories and the Early Fathers.

At the second Trullan Council A.D. 692 the exegesis of the Fathers was ruled as binding, putting an end to further comment on the Poem in the Christian Church.

The literature of the East contains tales where the love of man and woman is used to teach how ardently the heart should crave for the divine Embrace.

Yusuf and Zuleikha, written by the Persian poet Jami tells how Yusuf or the Joseph of the Bible is loved by Zuleikha or Potiphar's wife. After the heroine has undergone many sufferings, the impure love which at first consumed her becomes ennobled and purified, finally leading Zuleikha to the peace of true Love.

The Gita Govinda of Jayadeva also weaves the heavenly Love-story with the shadow fabric of terrestrial love.

As the enlightened Nizami states: 'The mystic word veiled by poetry, is the shadow of that veiled by prophecy.'

In his *Laila and Majnun* Nizami lifts the veil of poetry to reveal glimpses of the mystic's language:

'O Khizar, thou by Fortune blessed,
think not

That my praise of wine signifies the
grape's juice.

For by wine I am raised beyond myself
And it is this wine that I would bring to
my banquet,

My 'cup-bearer' is to fulfil my duties to God :

My 'daily draught at the inn' is the wine of self-forgetfulness.

For in truth never hath wine passed my lips.'

Sublime and poignantly beautiful is man's search for God, and the Canticle of Canticles gives utterance to the Quest as the bride sings of her ardent desire for unity with her Beloved. The poem is filled with the radiant language of Love which infuses fresh life into languid souls and leads them on to enjoy the enchantment of divine ecstasy.

Bernard of Clairvaux writes : 'Love is not uttered by the mouth, but springs joyously from the fountain of the heart. It is not a sound made by the lips, but the emotion and impulse of gladness stemming from within ; not mere words but a fusion of harmonious wills.'

In Sacred Scripture the marriage ceremony is often used as a symbol of divine Love.

'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' (Isa. 62 : 5).

(I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' (II Cor. 11 : 2).

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The Song of Songs

'The Song of Songs which is Solomon's.'

The Hebrew language not having the variety of terminations to set forth the different degrees of comparison generally repeats the same words to signify the superlative degree.

'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine.'

The soul is filled with deep yearning for that Kiss of divine Love which symbolizes perfect unity. 'Mercy and truth are met together : righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' (Ps. 85 : 10). The soul's

silence regarding the identity of her Beloved is eloquent testimony that He is intimately known to her, for her heart is penetrated and her thoughts wholly possessed by Him.

'Draw me, we will run after thee.'

Attracted by the alluring loveliness of the Bridegroom Word, the soul turns from error to seek Truth.

'The king hath brought me into his chambers.'

The spiritual bride enters into a secret dialogue with her royal Spouse ; this intimate Love-Song consists of silent speech, for in the divine Court of Love the soul hears unspeakable words.

'I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.'

The soul is in the process of undergoing purification. The mind being impure, the inner spiritual perfection remains hidden. 'My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.' (Job. 30 : 30).

'They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.'

Purified vision reveals to the soul that her preoccupation with worldly matters has been detrimental to spiritual progress.

'Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?'

The soul, wishing to belong exclusively to her divine Shepherd, prays that she will be led to the holy pasture where she may shelter from temptation. 'Nor the destruction that wasteth at noonday.' (Ps. 91 : 6).

'If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.'

The soul lacks Self-Knowledge ; she must seek the spirit of truth, the 'divine com-

forter', in order that she may be guided to the Path she is to follow.

'A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me ; he shall be all night betwixt my breasts.'

When the soul clasps the divine statutes to her heart she learns that the spiritual Path is arduous and covered with the thorns of bitter sorrow.

'My beloved is unto me, as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi'.

En-gedi near Jericho, was famed for its palm trees. Pursuing the anagogic Path, the soul receives her first lessons in humility ; she is made to drink the wine of remorse.

'Behold, thou art fair, my love ; behold, thou art fair ; thou hast dove's eyes.'

The contemplative bride is ravished by the loveliness of her heavenly Bridegroom ; unconscious to self, she is lost in the enjoyment of the divine Logos.

'I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.'

Purity of conscience allied to the sublime virtue of humility are the adornment of the soul, most pleasing to the Beloved ; but beauty blooms in the soul only when the will and reason have been purified, making contemplation possible.

'He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.'

Brought into the inner chamber of contemplation, the soul receives knowledge that Love embraces all virtues — it is beneath this brilliant standard that her Lord would have her stand.

'The voice of my beloved ! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart ; behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.'

The Presence of the Beloved in the heart is experienced as a lilting joy, an inward surge of ecstatic enjoyment. The divine Lover walks with secret, silent footfall, but His entry is made known to the loving soul by an unmistakable exultation.

'My beloved spake, and said unto me
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and
come away.'

With tender insistence the mind is weaned from attachment to terrestrial objects.

'For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

When the reason is illumined by the light of Wisdom, the winter of ignorance departs from the soul and Love's springtime burgeons forth in ripples of joy. Responding to the inner awakening, the soul is filled with happiness.

'O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs ; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.'

Schooled in humility the soul is aware of her utter helplessness and total dependence on her Lord ; she relies on His strength and guidance in all things.

'Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines : for our vines have tender grapes.'

The wise soul is on her guard against the smallest defects which like thieves are hidden among the ripening virtues, for they deplete her spiritual store. 'They shall be a portion for foxes.' (Ps. 63 : 10).

'By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth : I sought him, but I found him not.'

Burning with a strong desire for her Beloved, the soul cannot experience the rapture of the Word on the phenomenal or even noumenal planes; she must therefore rely solely on the guidance of Grace to lead her beyond the senses.

'I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth.'

The soul's love for the Bridegroom Word is all consuming and overpowering. Irresistibly drawn towards the object of her love, the soul displays undaunted courage in her determined search. This resolve to seek Truth is itself a gift of Grace.

'I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go.'

The mind being in abeyance, communion takes place with the heavenly Lord.

'Behold, King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.'

When the ego-will is surrendered to the Divine Will, enlightened understanding enables the receptive soul to perceive the glorious nuptial Crown of Love's Unity.

'How much better is thy love than wine!
and the smell of thine ointments than
all spices!'

The soul is ravished by a burning love which intensifies her yearning for union with the divine Essence. Within the palanquin of love the fragrant virtues of peace, kindness, mercy and other fruits of wisdom are to be found. The soul who hungers after Truth is presented with Love's palanquin and is refreshed thereby.

'I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.'

The Higher Self 'never slumbereth', and it is He who wakens the sleeping heart from the night of illusion.

'I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called, but he gave me no answer.'

The operations of Grace within the soul are mysterious. In pursuing the anagogic Path, the soul experiences a spiritual languor which is the sign of the Word's withdrawal. This causes intense sadness of spirit which is keen suffering to the love sick soul. In the words of St. John of the Cross: 'The sorrowful soul suffers great affliction when she thinks that God has abandoned her.'

'The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.'

The sense of separation from God causes anguish to the soul, and she pursues her restless quest with wounded heart, enduring the scoffing gibes of unbelievers who scorn her love of God. 'My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, 'Where is thy God?'

(Ps. 42: 3)

'I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.'

The soul's ardent yearning for her heavenly Bridegroom excludes all other desires; every fibre of her being is bent on possessing Him. 'My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' (Ps. 107: 9).

'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?'

The intellect seeks to receive understanding of Love's mysterious flame.

'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand — I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.'

Love transcends analytical reasoning, possessing a secret language all its own. Anchored to Love, the soul is endowed with a calm and sublime certainty which cannot be communicated to the intellect.

'There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one.'

Impure vision beholds a multiplicity of souls in different stages of unfoldment. For the divine Bridegroom there is only One Radiant Bride.

'I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished.'

Within the invisible kernel of the soul sanctifying grace is active; the divine Lover makes known this activity to the soul who knew not where to search for him. 'O God of hosts . . . behold, and visit this vine.' (Ps. 80 : 14).

'Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amni-nadib.'

Truth itself is the supreme object of mystical contemplation; it is on the wings of Grace that the willing soul is directed to her Lord. The word Amni-nadib signifies 'my willing' or 'princely people.'

'Return, return, O Shulamite; return, that we may look upon thee.'

Shulamite meaning 'perfection' and 'peace', the tranquil and perfected soul enjoys mystical union with her Beloved. The fruit of this spiritual marriage is to be distributed amongst those yet asleep in the spirit, that they too may awaken to Bliss.

'How beautiful are thy feet . . . thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon.'

She in whom the Beloved is well pleased, is praised for her holy beauty. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within.' (Ps. 45 : 13). 'He maketh my feet like hind's feet, and setteth me upon high places.' (Ps. 18:33). 'A

strong tower from the enemy.' (Ps. 61 : 3). Just as beauty plays a prominent role in physical courtship, so in the heavenly relationship spiritual loveliness is a source of delight. When the beautiful eyes of the understanding are opened, the soul reflects the clear depths of a calm and unruffled spirit.

'I said, I will go up to the palm tree.'

Established in the divine Heart of Love, the soul blossoms forth into rare beauty. 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.' (Ps. 92 : 12).

'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me.'

Grace has dispelled the illusion of ignorance which hindered and obstructed the soul in her Quest — she exults in the knowledge that she is now her Beloved's chaste spouse 'The desire of his eyes.' (Ezek. 24 : 16. '18).

'Come, my beloved let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards let us see if the vine flourish.'

It is in the calm solitude of contemplation that the inner harvest ripens.

'His left hand should be under my head and his right hand should embrace me.'

The soul has given ear to the inner Call in answer to that beloved Voice she has suffered deeply, cried bitterly, undergone severe trials. Yet despite everything she has emerged victorious and triumphant, testifying to the supreme and invincible Power of Love. Her reward is mystical union with the Absolute.

'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'

Love is not mere sentimentality but a dynamic energy. Under its manipulation the hard, flinty heart is moved, softened and

brought to life. The weeds of bad habits are torn out ; ignorance is dissipated by the light of Wisdom ; the crooked paths are made straight ; error recedes from reason, until the inner man shines with holy glory. The heart which is illumined by Wisdom recognises Love as the Sovereign Power.

'We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts : what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for ?'

The soul having entered the mystical Cave of the Heart and there enjoyed union with the Word, out of compassion for mankind teaches that Knowledge which she has intuited. This fecundity is the result of mystical contemplation.

'If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver ; and if she be a door we will enclose her with boards of cedar.'

It is with the 'words of the Lord' which are 'as silver', that the walls and 'everlasting doors' of the heavenly City are built. Those who hear the word of God and keep it 'shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.'

(Ps. 90 : 12).

'I am a wall, and my breasts like towers : then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.'

The soul perfected in Wisdom gives sweet sustenance to those who feed at her bosom. Fragrant and pure as the lily is the honeyed milk which flows from Mother Wisdom, unlike the pitiless mothers of Babylon who give to their babes the poisoned milk of ignorance.

'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like unto a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.'

The language of Love fills the soul with melody ; in vibrant, lilting, exuberant accents Love causes the heart to break out into ecstatic song. The ineffable experience of Blissful union takes place in Sacred Heart-Silence, for it is there that the Song of Love is born.

* * *

Saint Bernard writes :

'The soul embarks upon the spiritual Quest so that she may yield to the Word for correction ; receive an enlightened understanding ; be reliant upon it for virtue ; possess beauty, and be wedded to it so that she may be fruitful — lastly, that she may enjoy everlasting Bliss.'

Gregory of Nyssa taught that Love's Ideal is reached when the Bride-soul soars beyond all things material to that state which he termed 'apathy',¹ by which he meant complete withdrawal from the bodily senses. Such detachment leads to the highest enjoyment of Truth, when the heavenly Bridegroom bestows upon His bride the sacred Kiss of divine Unity.

Solomon's mighty Hymn of Love sings an ageless song :

'With an everlasting love have I loved thee : therefore have I drawn thee with loving kindness.' (Jer. xxxi : 3).

¹ See the explanation of the term 'apatheia' in the article 'Spiritual Traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church' by Father Lazarus in our issue of January 1964.—(Editor)

Christ may be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but if he be not born anew within your own heart, you remain eternally forlorn.

— ANGELUS SILESIUS.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE QUEST IN THE ODYSSEY

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

WHY did the ancient Greeks regard the Homeric poems as a religious authority? They could be considered religious in the sense that they recorded norms of conduct, even though they lacked the high ethical standards and the preoccupation with dharma of the Hindu epics. They were religious too in that they comprised allegories of the quest. They were composed in the language of symbolism.

The question how many of the ancients saw the symbolism would be as pointless as the question how many moderns see the allegory of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. It was certainly there to see and some must have seen it or the epics would not have been regarded with such reverence.

The *Odyssey*, it will be remembered, starts near the end and then proceeds with a throw-back. Let us follow Homer in this. The final episode shows Penelope, the faithful wife of Odysseus, still ruling his rocky homeland of Ithaca after his years of enforced wandering through perilous adventures. But she is beset by unruly nobles who pester her to marry one of them and proclaim him ruler, giving Odysseus up as lost and disinherit their adolescent son Telemachus.

Penelope can be understood as the rightly directed human state, Odysseus as the active side of it struggling through the many vicissitudes of the quest, and Telemachus as the new man emerging out of it. The suitors are the still unsubdued tendencies which try to capture it and turn it to their own use and enjoyment. Finally they set a term for Penelope; they will wait only till she finishes weaving the tapestry she is engaged on, but no longer. However, she circumvents them; each night she unravels what she had

woven the previous day. The tapestry is Maya, woven during the daytime of activity, unravelled during the night of meditation. Then Odysseus arrived. Having come safe through all the perils of the quest, he is ready to appear now as the bridegroom, the triumphant hero. He is ready to appear, but first the forces of disorder must be subjugated. He appears as a destitute wanderer. Penelope recognizes him but the suitors do not. Precautions have to be taken lest they slay him before he has established himself — as the rebellious generations slew the prophets, as the blindly orthodox slew Christ. He remains disguised until he is manoeuvred into a position where he can overcome them.

That is the essence of the story but there are many wayside adventures, just as there are in the life of the wayfarer. Also there are changes in symbolism, one aspect or another being depicted as required. Only a few salient features are pointed out here. The story of Helen and Paris and the Trojan War would be the subject of another no less complex symbolical story.

There is one episode, it will be recalled, where the sirens, treacherous nymphs singing with irresistible beauty, try to lure Odysseus and his men on to the rocks where their ship will be dashed to pieces and they themselves drowned. Odysseus foils their scheme by making his men plug their ears with wax before reaching their haunt. Only he himself kept his ears open but took the precaution of getting lashed to a mast and forbidding his men to release him till he was out of the danger zone. The songs of the sirens obviously represent the lures of the subtle world which have led so many spiritual wayfarers to perdition. Odysseus is one of the few hardy ones who can experience

this dangerous beauty without getting destroyed by it.

Then there is the story of Circe. Some of the men go ashore on a beautiful isle to replenish their water supply and there encounter an enchantress who offers them food and wine. By partaking of it they give her power over them, and she uses it by dashing a cup of wine in their faces and turning them into swine. She represents Maya, and those who succumb to her allurements are turned into swine, forgetting their upright manhood.

A strange parallel is to be found in a story of Vishnu. He becomes infatuated with his own daughter — Divine Power with the beauty of creation. To make love to her would be incest, so he transforms both of them into swine, for whom, there is no such ban. Thus transformed, he wallows happily until reminded of his true nature.

And how does Odysseus escape? While he is on his way to Circe's house Hermes, a youth represented in Greek mythology as the messenger of the gods, comes especially to warn him and teaches him a charm which will turn the tables on Circe, giving him power over her. The 'messenger of the gods' is divine intuition. Forewarned, the hero of mythology averts the snares of Maya, not only retaining his manhood but

subjecting her to his will. As with the sirens, he is able to experience the allurements of the subtle world without becoming enslaved to them.

The story of Polyphemus is less obvious. The one-eyed giant who captures Odysseus and his men and shuts them up in his cave, intending to devour them, two a day, at first sight suggests the single eye of Siva, destructive of duality. But actually it must be only a dark simulacrum of this, such as must come from one-pointed concentration of a harmful, not a sublime nature, for Polyphemus is a danger to survival and it is Odysseus who triumphs and lives by putting out his eye. It is Odysseus too, it will be remembered, who attains symbolically the Nameless state by telling Polyphemus when asked his name, that it is Noman, so that, when the blinded giant's companions ask who has done this to him he answers: "No man has done it", thus enabling Odysseus and his men to escape.

These symbolical stories are indeed a sort of code, a reminder to those who have the key to them. There is a wealth of them in ancient Greek, as in Hindu and Norse, mythology — the Golden Fleece, the Labours of Hercules and many more that have lasted through the ages and can still serve as a reminder if read aright.

Pre-Existence

from the 18th Century English mystic WILLIAM LAW

The created soul is a creature of Time, and had its beginning on the 6th day of Creation, but the Essences of the soul, which were then formed into a creature and into a state of distinction from GOD had been in GOD from all eternity, or they could not have been breathed forth from GOD into the form of a living creature. That which thinks and wills in the soul is that very same unbeginning breath which thought and

willed in GOD before it was breathed into the form of a human soul. Thou beganst as Time began, but as Time was in Eternity before it became days and years, so thou wast in GOD before thou wast brought out into creation, and as Time is neither a part of Eternity nor broken off from it, so thou art not a part of God, nor broken off from Him, yet born out of Him."

THE WAY OF CHUANG TZU

By
FATHER THOMAS MERTON

*A Hat Salesman and
A Capable Ruler*

CHUANG TZU (4th-3rd cent. B.C.) is in many respects the greatest and most spiritual of the Chinese philosophers. He is also the chief authentic historical spokesman for Taoism (Lao Tzu being legendary and known to a great extent through Chuang Tzu in any case.) Therefore Chuang Tzu stands in opposition to the traditional Confucian philosophy, and has been regarded by the orthodox Confucians as a rather dangerous thinker, the professional boat rocker of Chinese thought. The reason for this is that Chuang Tzu wanted to insist that there was something more to life than the piety, the order, the rites, and the humanitarian feelings which contributed to the social harmony preached by Confucius. Chuang Tzu looked on life as a whole — and as a mystery — that could not be grasped merely in a clear doctrine, with logical explanations for the way things are, implemented by orderly social customs and patterns of behaviour. He reached out to something more, something which could not be expressed, and yet could be lived: the ineffable *Tao*. Anything that falls short of *Tao* is limited and fallible. Yet *Tao* is not totally out of man's reach. On the contrary, by humility, simplicity, childlikeness and what we would call a spirit of faith, one can live in union with *Tao*, even though one may not be able to understand just how this comes about, or give a clear explanation of the fact. It is this holy and sometimes humorous simplicity that is at the heart of Chuang Tzu, and strange to say, it has made his doctrine seem, to some people, terribly difficult.

The following versions of Chuang Tzu are the result of a meditative reading in various translations and they stick closely to the texts of these translations, with occasional glosses and simplifications, which are always very slight.

A man of Sung did business
In silk ceremonial hats.
He travelled with a load of hats
To the wild men of the south.
The wild men had shaved heads,
Tattooed bodies.
What did they want
With silk
Ceremonial hats?

Yao had wisely governed
All China.
He had brought the entire world
To a state of rest.
After that, he went to visit
The four Perfect Ones
In the distant mountains
Of Ku Shih.
When he came back
Across the border
Into his own city
His lost gaze
Saw no throne.

The Ereath of Nature

When great Nature sighs, we hear the winds
Which, noiseless in themselves,
Awaken voices from other beings,
Blowing on them.

From every opening
Loud voices sound. Have you not heard
This rush of tones?

There stands the overhanging wood
On the steep mountain:
Old trees with holes and cracks
Like snouts, maws and ears,
Like beam-sockets, like goblets
Grooves in the wood, hollows full of water:
You hear mooing and roaring, whistling
Shouts of command, grumblings,
Deep drones, sad flutes.
One call awakens another in dialogue.

Gentle winds sing timidly
 Strong ones blast on without restraint.
 Then the wind dies down. The openings
 Empty out their last sound.
 Have you not observed how all then
 trembles and subsides ?

Yu replied : I understand :
 The music of the world sings through a
 thousand holes.
 The music of man is made on flutes and
 instruments.
 What makes the music of heaven ?

Master Ki said :
 Something is blowing on a thousand
 different holes.
 Some power stands behind all this and
 makes the sounds die down
 What is this power ?

Great Knowledge

Great knowledge sees all in one.
 Small knowledge breaks down into the many.

When the body sleeps, the soul is enfolded
 in One.

When the body wakes, the openings begin
 to function.

They resound with every encounter,
 With all the varied business of life, the
 strivings of the heart ;

Men are blocked, perplexed, lost in doubt.
 Little fears eat away their peace of heart.
 Great fears swallow them whole.
 Arrows shot at a target : hit and miss :
 right and wrong.

That is what men call judgement, decision.
 Their pronouncements are as final.

As treaties between emperors :
 O, they make their point !

Yet their arguments fall faster and feebler
 Than dead leaves in autumn and winter
 Their talk, flows out like piss, it is
 Never to be recovered.

They stand at last, blocked, bound and
 gagged,

Choked up like old drain pipes,
 The mind fails. It shall not see
 light again.

Pleasure and rage
 Sadness and joy
 Hopes and regrets
 Change and stability
 Weakness and decision
 Impatience and sloth :
 All are sounds from the same flute,
 All mushrooms from the same wet mould.
 Day and night follow one another and come
 upon us
 Without our seeing how they sprout !

Enough ! Enough !
 Early and late we meet " That "
 From which then all grow !

If there were no " That "
 There would be no " I ".
 If there were no " I "
 There would be nothing for all these winds
 to play on.
 So far can we go.
 But how shall we understand
 What brings it about ?

One may well suppose a True Governor
 To be behind it all. That such a Power works
 I can believe. I cannot see his form.

He acts, but has no form.

Three Friends

There were three friends
 Discussing life.

One said :
 " Can men live together
 And know nothing of it ?
 Work together

And produce nothing ?
 Can they fly around in space
 And forget to exist
 World without end ? "

The three friends looked at each other
 And burst out laughing.
 They had no explanation.
 Thus they were better friends than before.

* * *

Then one friend died.
 Confucius
 Sent a disciple to help the other two
 Chant his obsequies.

The Disciple found that one friend
Had composed a song.
While the other played a lute
They sang :

'Hey, Sung Hu!
Where'd you go?
Hey, Sung Hu!
Where'd you go?
You have gone where '
Where you really were.
And we are here —
Damn it! We are here!'

* * *

Then the Disciple of Confucius burst in on
them and exclaimed :

"May I inquire where you found this in the
rubrics for obsequies,

This frivolous carolling in the presence of
the departed?"

The two friends looked at each other and
laughed.

"Poor fellow" they said, "he doesn't know
the new liturgy."

Lao Tse's Wake

Lao Tan lay dead
Chin Shih attended the wake.
He let out three yells
And went home.

One of the disciples said:
Were you not the Master's friend?
"Certainly." He replied.

"Is it then sufficient for you
To mourn no better than you have just
done?"

"In the beginning," (said Chin Shih)
"I thought
He was the greatest of men.
No longer! When I came to mourn
I found old men lamenting him as their son,
Young men sobbing as though for their
mother.

How did he bind them to himself so tight,
if not

By words he should never have said
And tears he should never have wept?

"He weakened his true being
He laid on load upon
Load of emotion, increased
The enormous reckoning:
He forgot the gift God had entrusted to him:
This the ancients called 'punishment
For neglecting the True Self.'

"The Master came at his right time
Into the world. When his time was up
He left it again.
He who awaits his time, who submits
When his work is done,
In his life there is no room
For sorrow or for rejoicing.
Here is how the ancients said all this
In four words:

'God cuts the thread!'

"We have seen a fire of sticks
Burn out. The fire now
Burns in some other place. Where?
Who knows? These brands
Are burned out."

Confucius and the Madman

When Confucius was visiting the state
of Chu

Along came Kieh Yu

The madman of Chu

And sang outside the Master's door:

"O Phoenix, Phoenix,
Where is your virtue gone?
It cannot reach the future
Or bring the past again!

When the world makes sense
The wise have work to do.

They can only hide

When the world's askew.

Today if you can stay alive

Lucky are you:

Try to survive!

Joy is feather light

But who can carry it?

Sorrow falls like a landslide

Who can parry it?

Never, never
Teach virtue more.

You walk in danger,
Beware! Beware!
Even ferns can cut your feet —
When I walk crazy
I walk right:
But am I a man
To imitate?"

The tree on the mountain height is its
own enemy.

The grease that feeds the light devours
itself.

The cinnamon tree is edible: so it is cut
down!

The lacquer tree is profitable: they maim it
Everyman knows how useful it is to be
useful.

No one seems to know
How useful it is to be useless.

POETRY

By
'ALONE'

LOOK at scenery.....nature.....
the mind is at once suspended, so to
say. 'Suspended' means: for the moment
it is at a standstill;.....later thoughts,
the non-stop machinery of thoughts, may
set in whirring.....

So, perhaps, to take 'advantage' (——
I am expressing it crudely.....) of *this*
(of such an opportunity of looking
at nature)

or also when we are moved by a tear or
a laugh if one can prolong
this or 'see' how 'the
mind' comes in (again), even in such a
(golden) opportunity even there
—— even in *such* circumstances ——
.....how 'the mind' comes, and says,
"how beautiful it is, how charm-
ing"; or 'the mind'
names some particular flower or tree or
bird; or it says: "how beautiful is the
curve of the mountain, how violently, how
noisily the cataract is falling, in what diffu-
sion of colours the clouds are hanging, how
sweet the birds are warbling.....," or,
"how soothing is the cadence of music
.....", or, (looking down a hill) "how
extensively up to the horizon, the
panorama stretches" and the
thought: "it should be depicted or turned
into a poem or a photograph or a painting."

and also the various ways of comparing
the present experience to a like one.....
etc., etc.

In this way the mind again 'comes'

[though all this may look enchanting, even
noble,—— still it is 'the mind'!]

Thus the mind again comes and 'disturbs'
the state casually, without effort,
established (so to say) —— though, per-
haps, it may be 'fleeting'.

Just be 'aware' how it all
happens!!

The only advantage ('advantage' is just
a word) to be taken of this 'opportunity'
is: conditioning is not there *at all* at this
'junction'.

This should serve as a suggestion to poets
(who are given to making, especially), or
..... to all poets in general, I think!

The poets have not been made alive (I am
afraid) to the Truth As they have
(naturally) 'perception', they should stop
there, and should not land in words (even
mentally) when they
are moved by a tear or a laugh.

They do not know that 'perception' (and
stopping there) is itself words——
real (living) words ——!

About 'communication' or say about
'sharing',—— (this is my concept ——
I may be wrong) —— they need not
bother.

It will take place, breaking through
'silence' —— 'perception' —— 'his
reticence' —— in spite of
themselves whenever there
is 'need'.

MILAREPA, TIBET'S GREAT POET-SAINT*

By
DOROTHY DONATH

MILAREPA was second in succession in the line of Gurus of the Kargyutpa or Mahamudra School of the Tibetan Vajrayana. This school, founded in the 11th Century A.D. by his Guru, Marpa the Translator, has maintained its succession unbroken down to the present day. His life spanned more than eighty years at a time when the flood of Islam was sweeping over India and threatening Hinduism and Buddhism alike. It is largely due to him and his Guru Marpa that much of Buddhism's spiritual heritage was preserved in that part of the world.

There has been no teacher in the history of Tibet to surpass Milarepa for the depth and purity of his vision or to rival the place he held and still holds in the minds and hearts of his people. He excelled no less as a poet than a saint. He is said to have had a fine singing voice, and the classic 'Hundred Thousand Songs' (recently translated into English in their entirety¹) is familiar to all Tibetans. Herdsmen still sang many of them in the high pastures of the Himalayas until the Chinese Communists silenced them. The block-printed 'Songs' with the 61 stories that frame them embody the whole gamut of Buddhist teachings. They are the outcome of the poetic genius and spiritual Enlightenment of Milarepa, matured in the silence and grandeur of the great Snow Mountains where he dwelt in caves, taught the people and meditated on the Illuminating Void. They carry a message still pertinent to-day, as it was when he sang them ("in a tuneful voice like that of the god Brahma," so the records say) to humble villagers and disciples, to Yogis, Pandits and scholars, to demons and subtle beings, and even to the animals, in the High Himalayas so many centuries ago.

Both India and China were highly civilized

at this time, and Tibet had received an influx from the culture of both.

The outline of Milarepa's life-story is well known²—how he and his mother and sister were deprived of their property and treated like beggars by relatives, how he learned sorcery in order to get his revenge on them and succeeded in doing so, how he had to undergo a terribly severe training in order to cleanse himself of the impurity of sorcery. One of his ordeals was to build a house single-handed and several times demolish and rebuild it. He came to see the symbolism of all his work and refers to it in the following lines:

Faith is the firm foundation of my house,
Diligence forms the high walls,
Meditation makes the huge stones,
And Wisdom is the great cornerstone.
With these four I build my castle,
And it will last as long as Truth eternal.

Milarepa taught the path of 'Yoga without form', the path of Liberation, known as Mahamudra, 'The Great Symbol', which is more or less equivalent to what in Hinduism would be called Jnana Marga. He himself describes it by saying:

Buddha cannot be found by searching,
So contemplate your own Mind.

This is not the limited, mundane, individual mind; it is the Buddha-mind which is potentially in all of us. Milarepa says of it:

The mind is omnipresent like space;
It illumines all manifestations as the Dharma-makaya;

It knows all and illumines all.

I see it clearly like a crystal in my palm.

¹ 'The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa' translated from the original Tibetan and annotated by Garma C. C. Chang, University Books, New York, 1962.

² In that connection, see 'Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa' by Evans-Wentz, Oxford University Press, and 'The Life of Milarepa' by Lobzang Jivaka, John Murray.

* Based upon a lecture delivered to the 'Washington Friends of Buddhism', Washington D.C., U.S.A., January 4th, 1964.

It does not correspond with subjective or objective, extrovert or introvert, conscious or unconscious mind in the terminology of modern psychology but transcends all such concepts.

In the Mind-Essence, the quintessential Light,
There is no adulteration by distracting thoughts.

In the real nature of beings, the realm of Mind,
There is no subject-object defilement.

In the natural state of Mind-Essence
There is no ground from which habitual-thought may rise.

The nature of the mind is Dharmakaya!

It is not defiled by forms

And from attributes is free.

I will now quote from the commentary on this in Prof. Chang's translation of the 'Hundred Thousand Songs'. "The main concern in 'Mahamudra', therefore, is the unfoldment of the true Essence of one's own mind. To accomplish this the disciple may meditate alone, following the Guru's instructions, or may be given the 'pointing-out' demonstration in an effort by the Guru to open his mind instantaneously. This can be done in different ways — by a smile, a blow, a push, a remark, a sudden exclamation, etc. This is strikingly similar to the tradition of Zen, although the style and process may differ.

"Again, most meditation practices are devised for the development of *mental concentration* — to hold on to a single object in the mind's eye — and a mental effort is required in all of them; but in Mahamudra meditation is spontaneous, effortless and natural: in its practice, *no object whatsoever* is held in the meditator's mind."^{3,4}

Those who are familiar with the methods and teaching of Zen will not find these ideas so very foreign or strange. Detachment, of course, is implicit in both teachings; and in Mahamudra, as in Zen, Dhyana (the pure concentrative state achieved in meditation) in its earlier stages (often mistakenly overvalued by the beginner) is only preliminary to a realization of the goal. However pleasant or blissful it may be, ecstatic dhyana should never be clung to, as it is liable to

plunge one into what is known as the 'dead-void', where all awareness is lost. Milarepa warns of this in the following stanza:

When your body is rightly posed and your
mind absorbed in deep meditation,
You may feel that thought and mind both
disappear;
Yet this is but the surface experience of
Dhyana.

By constant practice and mindfulness thereon,
One feels a radiant Self-awareness shining
like a brilliant lamp.

It is pure and bright as a flower,
It is like the feeling of staring
into the vast and empty sky.
The Awareness of Void is limpid and transparent,
yet vivid.

This non-thought, this radiant and transparent
experience,

Is but the feeling of Dhyana.

With this good foundation

One should pray further to the Three Precious
Ones⁵

And penetrate to Reality by deep thought and
contemplation.⁶

One can thus tie the non-ego Wisdom
With the beneficial life-rope of deep Dhyana,
With the power of kindness and compassion,
And with the altruistic vow of the Bodhi-
Heart,

One can see direct and clear

The truth of the Enlightened Path,

Of which nothing can be seen yet all is
clearly visioned.

One sees how wrong were the fears and
hopes of one's own mind,

Without arrival, one reaches the place of
Buddha;

Without seeing, one Beholds the Dharmakaya;

Without effort, one does all things naturally.

Bul Milarepa also warns the beginner:

Before you have realized Awareness in itself,
Chatter not about the View of Voidness!
All that which manifests

³ See Appendix to 'The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa', vol. 11 p. 683 ff. and notes referring to Mahamudra throughout the book.

⁴ Compare also the Maharshi's saying that: "The difference between meditation and Self-enquiry is that in meditation you have subject and object, whereas in Self-enquiry you have only the subject." (Editor)

⁵ Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

⁶ On sunyata or Voidness.

Is unreal as an echo,
Yet it never fails to produce
An effect that corresponds.
Karmas and virtues, therefore,
Should never be neglected

.....
Before the great Illumination
Shines forth in your mind, cling not
To sweet ecstasy and Voidness.
Though all things are Void-manifesting,
Never wallow in pleasures, nor expect
Your troubles to vanish without effort
Things in themselves are void ;
So never cling to Voidness
Lest you stray into formalism.
When in the tide of mundane bliss
One's crude, wandering thoughts subside.
An ecstasy will then arise. But he
Who is attached to it will go astray.

I have limited myself to quotations bearing on Milarepa's teaching. I only wish there were space enough to illustrate also his humour, his love of the beautiful in nature and his compassion towards all living beings. Apart from all this, his contacts and contests with 'demons' and other 'magic beings' were varied and numerous. Some modern readers find it hard to conceive of the objective reality of these, but the same applies also to our material world :⁷ in the realm of the Absolute, nothing (as we are capable of knowing or imagining it on this relative plane) exists. As Milarepa has said, in the light of Ultimate Reality our lives here and now are as illusory and dream-like as an echo.

I have tried to convey, as best I could⁸ some impression of the spirit and stature of this great Buddhist, who arose at a time and in a setting very strange to us, yet whose breadth of vision, prophetic insight and love of Truth cross every barrier of time, space and cultural tradition. Knowing that mankind had already entered upon the kali yuga, the present spiritually dark age, Milarepa reiterated the following prophetic words spoken to him in his youth by his Guru, Marpa.

He said : 'At the time of defilement,
When the Buddha's teaching declines.
Lives will be short and merits poor
Evils and hindrances in myriad forms
Will overshadow the world ;

Leisure and long life will become most rare ;
Knowledge will expand to a point
Too stupendous to comprehend ;
Proofs and conclusions will be hard to reach.
To understand the truth of Tantra will be
most difficult.

'Therefore, my son, try nothing else,
But work hard at the practice.

How true this is of our world to-day ; and remember that it was said in a remote part of Asia nearly a thousand years ago ; Here surely is food for thought !

Milarepa taught, as he practised, the Vajrayana form of Buddhism (i.e. the Diamond or Adamantine Way) both as the 'Path of Means' (the six yogas of Naropa) and the 'Path of Liberation' (the Mahamudra), which converge in their higher stages. But this was not all ; he never forgot the foundations upon which all schools of Buddhism rest : — reverence for Gautama the Buddha, recitation and understanding of the Three Refuges (actually, four in the Tibetan form, for refuge in the Guru is added to refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha), the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Twelfefold Chain of Dependent Origination, the Precepts and Paramitas, the non-existence of ego, and above all the essential unity of Wisdom and Compassion. He stressed also the Bodhisattva Vow, the gist of which is to attain the highest possible perfection for the benefit of all living beings. What he taught was a synthesis of the essentials of all Buddhist Schools.

Above all, he counselled practice ; and indeed, the Kargyutpa School is known also as the 'Tradition of Practice'. Without practice of what we know, he tells us, however little that may be, without destruction of ego-clinging and the seeds of 'habitual-thinking' in the *alaya* or 'Store Consciousness', without cultivation of our deeper intuitive faculties and spiritual awareness, without the active use of understanding and compassion towards all our fellow beings, animal as well as human, intellectual know-

⁷ Similarly, when the Maharshi was asked whether Vaikunta, the Vaishnavite heaven, did not exist only in the imagination, he replied : "So does this world." (Editor)

⁸ Actually better than here appears, since it was necessary to shorten the article. (Editor)

ledge alone will avail us little on the Path, so that Liberation from the Wheel of birth-and-death becomes impossible. This does not mean that thought and study should be neglected — far from it; reflection and knowledge are very necessary parts of our foundation; only the primary emphasis after one has passed the stage of initial enquiry should be placed upon insight and enlightenment (that is Bodhichitta, the Wisdom Heart, the Enlightened Consciousness) which is to be attained through some form of daily practice and meditation, wherever and on whatever level we find ourselves *to-day*. The benefits derived therefrom will make themselves felt in a wonderful way and lead to greater ones, even in the busiest of everyday human lives.

Milarepa stressed the need for self-discipline, for a humble and loving heart, for a constant awareness of the transiency of all compound things and the ultimate Reality of the Buddhahood within us and the possibility of its Realization in this very life. He bade us remember the Illuminating Void of Mind itself, the origin and matrix of all manifested things, where giver and receiver, subject and object, high and low, this and that, meditation and meditator, all dichotomies and dualities, interfuse and are dissolving in transcendent Light. Buddhahood is not attained but unfolded — if need be, step by step — starting *now*, with the means we have at hand and growing through practice to the point where all means may be discarded, like the raft in which we have crossed to the other shore.

The ultimate step, and for some fortunate ones the entire path, does indeed by-pass all means and stages. This is Mahamudra — direct awareness of the Essence of Mind itself. This is the summit or essence of the Kargyutpa Way.

Finally, I would like to close by quoting another stanza by Milarepa and one by his disciple Rachungpa.

By MILAREPA

To give alms to the needy with compassion
Is equal to serving Buddha in the three times.⁹
To give with sympathy to beggars is
To make offerings to Milarepa.
Sentient beings are one's parents; to
Discriminate between them is harmful and
Ignorant. True sages and scholars
Are always in accord;
Clinging to one's own school and condemning
others
Is the certain way to waste one's learning.
Since all Dharmas are equally good,
Those who cling to sectarianism
Degrade Buddhism and sever
Themselves from Liberation.
All the happiness one has
Is derived from others;
All the help one gives to them
In return brings happiness.
One's pernicious deeds
Only harm oneself.

By RACHUNGPA

The rivers of India and Nepal,
Divided by different valleys,
Flow in different directions.
Yet, as rivers, they are all alike —
In the great ocean they will meet again.

Divided by the four continents,
The sun rises in the east, the moon
Sets in the west; as light-bearers
They are both alike: on a cloudless
Autumn evening they sometimes see each
other.

Veiled by ignorance,
The minds of man and Buddha
Appear to be different;
Yet in the realm of Mind-Essence
They are both of one taste. Sometime
They will meet each other
In the great Dharmadhatu.

⁹ Past, present and future.

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.

— ST. PAUL (*Corinthians*).

CH'AN POETRY

By
L. T. WANG

Mr. Wang is one of the older generation still imbued with traditional Chinese culture. He was permanent representative of several important Chinese papers at the U.N. until the Communist Government took over and Chinese culture was negated.

THERE are many styles of Ch'an poetry. One is the quatrain which must "Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand." Consider, for instance, the two famous ones connected with the succession to the Fifth Patriarch. As his end approached, Hung Jen declared that he would transmit his authority to whichever disciple could write the best quatrain. Only Shen Hsiu, the senior disciple among the monks, presumed to try. He wrote on the monastery wall:

The body is a Bodhi-tree,
The heart a shining mirror,
Clean it unceasingly
So that no dust may gather.

An illiterate provincial labourer asked the meaning and, on being told, got a monk to write underneath it for him:

There is no Bodhi-tree,
No shining mirror;
There is nothing.
Where then could the dust gather?

Both are true but on different levels. The author of the latter, which represents the higher, the non-dual level of truth, was appointed successor and became the Sixth Patriarch, the famous Hui Neng.¹

This higher viewpoint is perfectly orthodox. There is justification for it in many of Buddha's sayings. For instance: "Listen, monks! The body is not the Self. If the body was the Self it could not fall ill."² And again: "Listen, monks! All that is physical, whether in us or in the outer world, all that is physical is the non-Self. I am not it; it is not my self."³

As another Chinese Sage put it: "To seek for the Buddha in the Scriptures instead

of in yourself is like seeking for Nirvana in the sands of the sea-shore."³

Then again, some Ch'an poems make use of the humorous or mocking style known as 'Ta Yo' which was practised in China even before the introduction of Buddhism. This is what might be called 'shock tactics' and has something in common with the well known Ch'an and Zen technique of shocking the disciple into realization by a blow with a stick. It must be remembered that there are two Ch'an traditions of spiritual training, one leading to gradual Enlightenment and the other to sudden.⁴ In the latter tradition the Lin Chi school is said to have employed the stick to great effect. It is the same result that Ch'an poets aim at with their 'shock tactics'. They find countless occasions for surprise, using anything that can bewilder or defy the reason and common sense, anything paradoxical or incredible, any form of mockery or humour. The following is an anonymous example, said to be Ch'an.

¹ Our contributor A. Rao, refers to these two stanzas in his poem published in our issue of October 1964, p. 209, when he writes:

Be a glass polished bright
To reflect the light.
But Hui Neng said
There is no glass.
Let the ego-self be dead,
This will come to pass.
Then all Fate's teeth are drawn
In that glad dawn. (Editor)

² Samyutta Nikaya.

³ Sayings of Hui Chao.

⁴ However, it must be remembered that, however gradual the approach may be, the actual Enlightenment, through whatever religion it may be approached, is always a sudden change of state, like physical birth or physical death; and however sudden the change of state may be, the person must always have become ripe for it, as with physical birth or physical death. (Editor)

No one in the world can understand
This poem of mine,
They ask me about it—
I don't understand it myself.

This poem of mine is myself. But the apparent 'me' is illusory and does not really exist. Who, then, can explain what does not exist? I also, being a man, cannot understand what does not exist.

Suffice it to deal briefly here with two of the greatest Masters of Ch'an poetry, Wang Fan Tse and Han Shan.⁶

Of the former very little is known, though he has had a considerable influence. He lived in the latter part of the sixth century and the influence of his style was still felt three centuries later. He was not a monk but a Ch'an lay scholar. Many of his poems are in the 'Ta Yo' tradition. In the following quatrain he plays on the sound of words to baffle the reader:

The eyes of wisdom are an empty heart;
They have nothing to do with these holes in
the skull.
You say you don't recognize them?
Then you don't deserve the name of Tong
that your mother gave you.

The first two lines reiterate once more the familiar teaching that for the Sage thought and the Physical world (symbolised by the skull and duality of two eyes) are only an illusion, whereas true vision is unitive. He who is taken in by the duality is not Enlightened and has no right to the name of 'Tong', which means 'understanding' but which was also a commonly used name at that time. Furthermore, the word for 'mother' also signifies 'universal origin'. The last two lines, therefore imply that if you don't understand this you are nothing but a fool, even though understanding were your very nature.

Such a play of words is often used to hide a deeper meaning. For instance:

I Fan Tse, have put my stockings inside-out?
"Wrong! A mistake! Every one will tell
you so.

Good heavens! I would rather put your
eyes out
Than hide my feet."

The feet symbolise one's progress towards Enlightenment and thereby the Path, while at the same time they also symbolise the lower possibilities of a man and are to be kept hidden. This dual symbolism gives its provocative nature to the last line. Here Wang Fan Tse is declaring in a facetious way that he would rather deprive his interlocutor of dualistic vision than conceal the Path from him.

In much of his work there is what looks like pessimism and fear of death, despite his writing at other times like a Sage. For instance:

To see your carrion, dead rat!
Red steel across my belly!
Not that I am mourning you, you rat!—
But the fear: —when will my turn come?⁷

There is the same air of pessimism in the following verses, which show the influence of Taoist naturalism:⁸

Every one has a body: —illusion.
Red steel across my belly!
One is reborn after death? Yes,
But when I come back I shall have forgotten
everything!
Just to think of that
Makes life bleached and drab!
Better, my heart, to console yourself,
Ignobly,
Fall often dead drunk!

The following four lines, in much the same strain, have become famous and given rise to a number of commentaries:

These clay loaves outside the town—
Their stuffing of grass is in the town.
You ought to eat one.
Don't scoff at those who are put off by them.

The 'clay loaves' are the tumuli along the sides of the road outside the town. The

⁶ On the basis of the 'T'ai Ping Kwang Chi'.

⁷ The fear? All right if it is only a poet writing, but a Sage? (Editor)

⁸ The clinging to ego-sense of a poet who knows the theory but fears to become a Sage? (Editor)

'stuffing of grass' is the towns-folk who will eventually be buried in them. -

The poet Huang Shan-Kun of the Sung Dynasty pointed out the illogicality of the last two lines — to be at the same time the stuffing and the diner, the eater and the eaten; but illogicality doesn't matter since it is a question of awakening, and therefore he entered into the spirit of the game with the following commentary:

These clay loaves outside the town,
With their grass stuffing in the town:
Water them well with wine —
That's the way to get up an appetite for them.⁹

This poem was again taken up for treatment by the monk Ko Chin, a great Ch'an Master of the Southern Sung Dynasty.

These clay loaves outside the town,
With their stuffing of grass in the town,
Weep, they and their party.
For him they devour
We all become stuffing for them, one after another,
No end to the moving queue.
Let that be a warning to you:—
Don't sleep; keep your eyes open!

No mere reflection on transience this time, since the last line is an exhortation to wisdom. Every one can have his eyes open, that is to say has the ability to realize his condition. Let us then not be like the witness ones who sleep although they have eyes to see.

Returning to Wang Fan Tse, he too was inclined to give sage counsel, but in a subtler way. For instance, in the following quatrain it remains implicit.

Others ride high horses,
I amble along on a donkey;
But behind walks a rogue with two bundles of faggots —
I feel a catch in my heart.

Those who ride through life with high aims and ambitions do not notice death trudging along behind them, as he does who ambles along naturally.¹⁰

In many of Wang Fan Tse's poems either the obscurity is deliberate or the symbolism too far-fetched for modern readers. For instance:

No one lives for a hundred years,
Why then dream of a sound that lasts a thousand years?
The demons, forging an iron door-bolt,
Cheer derisively.

Again the evanescence of life. The 'sound' is life. To seek to prolong it a thousand years is compared to the stupidity of trying to shut demons out of your house with an iron door-bolt.

The other poet that I want to speak about is Han Shan of the T'ang Dynasty, believed to have been born between 766 and 799. He was the most esteemed of the followers of Wang Fan Tse, even though he sometimes made fun of him. Tradition has it that he retired to Mt. Tien T'ai in the south of Chekiang. He acquired his name, 'master of the Gold Mountain', in reference to the eternal snow of his retreat.

It is said that he used to tramp the forests writing poems on the rocks and tree trunks. Many of them were pastoral poems, showing an ironic contempt for the learned and towns. He is said to have been accompanied by She De, another vagabond monk of the same ilk. The two friends are said to have met at Kuo-Chin temple on the summit of Tien T'ai.

The Master Chang Nien once went to this temple to visit the two friends, and this is what he has to say about them: For a long time I had admired Han Shan and She De, but when I went to see them I found a couple of buffaloes. They were amusing themselves attacking each other like two bulls. I told them to stop it, but they continued snarling at each other."

⁹ Wine as a symbol of ecstasy, as in all religions? (Editor)

¹⁰ What Sage counsel? To take life easy? Yes. To face the thought of death? Yes. But to feel a pang in the heart from the fear of death? (Editor)

This is indeed typical of the attitude of Ch'an poets to one another. Actually, nearly all the poems of these two have disappeared, but such fragments as survive show, on the one hand, a constant desire to surprise and offend so-called human dignity. The following shows how Han Shan could deride the learned and subtle Wang Fan Tse:

After his death, Fan Tse
Went to see the old king of hell;
He had read the books of a hundred royal
sages,
But he was roasted and well roasted.
Just to have called once on the Name of
Buddha
Would have sufficed: You are on the path
of Buddha.

Mingled⁸ with this element of sarcasm is another strain also, the love of nature. For instance:

I seek a quiet retreat
And Han Shan alone offers me peace.
The light breeze rustles the ancient pines;
The nearer you draw the gentler is the sound.

On the tree-top a white-haired man
Murmurs that he reads Chuang-Tse and
Lao-Tse.
For ten years now he has been unable to
return;
He has forgotten the path that brought him
here.

The 'white-haired man' can stand for any scholar, any student of the scriptures. Books have led him to a fictitious wisdom and so warped his mind that he has forgotten the true path and will not be able to get back to naturalness.

Let us end with another quotation in the same vein, though perhaps more profound:

If you meet the devil
The best thing is not to be afraid.
Courage! Don't look at this devil,
Just call him by name and he will flee of his
own accord.
To burn incense
Or ask help of the Buddha
Or make gestures seeking the aid of some
old monk
Is like a mosquito biting a bronze bull—
Where will it plunge its proboscis?

This refers to the unreality of evil. Call it by its own name, see it as unreal, and it disappears. But seek to pit good against it and you are accepting its own level, that of duality, of two opposite powers, and on this level you cannot defeat it. You cannot at the same time acknowledge its reality and destroy its power.¹¹

¹¹ Readers are reminded that this is one of the basic principles of Joel Goldsmith, that evil is unreal and is not to be defeated on the level of 'two powers' but dissolved by rising above it to the level of One Power and seeing it for the unreality that it is, i.e. by calling it by its true name. (Editor)

At the moment when one is able to concentrate his mind to the extreme of emptiness and is able to hold it there in serene tranquillity, then his spirit is unified with the spirit of the universe and it has returned to its original state from which his mind and all things in the universe have emerged as appearance.

All things are in a recurring process of appearing and disappearing, only to return to their original state. This may be called a kind of inertia, a drag on activity and manifestation, that brings all things back to their original state of composure. The original state is eternal. To understand this eternality of emptiness is enlightenment; without this enlightenment one's mind is engrossed in confusion and evil activity.

—TAO-TE-KING (Trans. Goddard).

ZEN POETRY

By
Prof. LUCIEN STRYK

Prof. Stryk has made a mark for himself as an authority both on poetry and Zen, apart from being himself a poet of some standing. He has experience of lecturing in Japan and is at present teaching poetry, creative writing and Oriental literature at Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois 60115. His collection of Buddhist readings entitled 'World of the Buddha' published by Doubleday, New York, is due out this spring; so is his book 'The Pit and other Poems', which contain some Zen poetry, published by Swallow Press, Chicago. His book: 'Zen: Poems, Prayers, Sermons, Anecdotes, Interviews', co-authored with Takashi Ikemoto was published by Doubleday Anchor in 1965.

EVEN in translation, or such at least is my hope, Zen poetry is so suggestive in itself that explication is for the most part unnecessary. Japanese Zennists rarely theorised about the poems they would write from time to time, and for good reason: to them poetry was not, as so often in the West, an art to be cultivated but a means by which an attempt at the nearly inexpressible could be made. Though some of their poems are called 'satori Poems' others death poems, in a sense all Zen poems deal with momentous experiences. There are, in other words, no 'finger exercises', and though some Zen poems seem comparatively light-hearted, there is not one that isn't totally in earnest, fully inspired.

Indeed, when you consider the Zennist's traditional goal, the all-or-nothing quality of his striving after illumination, this is scarcely to be wondered at.

Poets of the Chinese Ch'an School ('Zen' is the Japanese transliteration of 'Ch'an'), on whose works Japanese Zennists modeled their own, were far less reluctant to theorise, and fortunately there exist some very important documents, most of which have been excellently translated by Mr. James J. Y. Liu in his 'The Art of Chinese Poetry', describing their approach and attitude. There is the need, for example, to attain a state of calm, making it possible for the poet to get the spirit of nature into his poems.

This feeling is surely what Wang Wei, the great 5th Century painter, had in mind when he said (I quote from Mai-Mai Sze's 'The Tao of Painting'): "The form of the object must first fuse with the spirit, after which the mind transforms it in various ways. The spirit, to be sure, has no form; yet that which moves and transforms the form of an object is the spirit."

Even those Zennists who are not artists seem to understand this most important principle. For example, when in the course of interviewing for our Anchor Zen one of the masters of Yamaguchi, Takashi Ikemoto, and I asked how he would describe the state of mind in which an artist might produce something appealing to a Zennist, the master said: "It is a state of mind in which one is identified with an object without any sense of restraint."

Zen anecdotes concerning artists (and there are many), are usually very telling about that sort of thing: Spend ten years observing bamboos, become a bamboo yourself, then forget everything — and paint. Another way of thinking about this most significant principle of Zen aesthetics, and a convenient one for Westerners, is to recall Keats's 'Negative Capability', by which the poet means to suggest that the true artist does not assert his own personality, even if he fancies himself possessed of one; rather he identifies himself as far as possible with

the object of his contemplation, its personality, without feeling that he has to *understand* it.

The Rinzai Zennist Bunan (1602-'76) puts it this way:

The moon's the same old moon,
The flowers exactly as they were.
Yet I've become the thingness
Of all the things I see!

Zen poetry is highly symbolic and the moon, as in Bunan's poem, is a common symbol. It should be remembered, in relation to the use of such symbols, that as religion Zen is rooted in Mahayana Buddhism and that the Zennist searches, always within himself, for the indivisible moon reflected not only on the sea but on each dew drop as well. To discover this, the Dharmakaya, in all things, whether while sitting in meditation or writing a poem expressible of illumination, is for the Zennist to discover his own Buddha-nature.

Perhaps most Zen poems, whether designated as such or not, are satori poems composed immediately after an awakening and presented to a master for approval. Such poems delineate, usually very graphically, what the spiritual eye has been awakened to, a view of things seen as for the first time, in their eternal aspect. The following are typical satori poems:

Daito (1282-1337)

At last I've broken Ummon's barrier:
There's exit everywhere — east, west, north,
south.
In at morning, out at evening; neither host
nor guest.
My every step stirs up a little breeze.

Eichu (1340-1416)

My eyes eavesdrop on their lashes!
I'm finished with the ordinary!
What use has halter, bridle
To one who's shaken off contrivance?

Kokai (1403-'69)

Taking hold, one's astray in nothingness:
Letting go, the Origin's regained.
Since the music stopped, no shadow's touched
My door: again the village moon's above the
river.

The last poem illustrates another most important principle of Zen, and one that seems to appeal especially to those Westerners interested in Zen: that is 'letting go'. Briefly, this is the idea that one never gets what one grasps at. Seek not, in other words, and ye shall find. Here is another poem, by Kanemitsu-Kogun (18th Century) based on the same Zen idea:

My hands released at last, the cliff soars
Ten thousand metres, the ploughshare sparks,
All's consumed with my body. Burn again,
The lanes run straight, the rice well in the ear.

Traditionally death poems are written or dictated by Zennists just before dying. The author looks back upon his life and, in a few highly compressed lines, expresses his state of mind at the inevitable hour. The following are typical:

Fumon (1302-'69)

Magnificent! Magnificent!
No one knows the final word.
The ocean bed's aflame,
Out of the Void leap wooden lambs.

Kukoku (1328-1407)

Riding this wooden upside-down horse,
I'm about to gallop through the Void.
Would you seek to trace me?
Ha! Try catching the tempest in a net.

Zekkai (1336-1405)

The Void has collapsed upon the earth,
Stars, burning, sheet across Iron Mountain.
Turning a somersault, I brush past.

The Void mentioned in all three of these death poems is the great Penetration of Zen. The mind, it is thought, is a void or empty space in which objects are stripped of their objectivity, reduced to their essence, their common and cosmic essence.

In the following death poem by Bokuo (1384-1455) there is an important Zen symbol, the ox, which here serves as an object of discipline. The poet, in his calm acceptance of death, proves himself a true Zen-man:

For seventy-two years
I've kept the ox well under,
Today, the plum in bloom again,
I let him wander in the snow.

It would be misleading to claim that only Zennists exhibit such stoicism at the final hour. In his brilliant essay 'Artists and Old Age' Gottfried Benn tells of the diamond dealer Solomon Rossbach who, just before leaping to his death from the top of the Empire State Building scrawled this note:

No more above,
No more below —
So I leap off.

Which, by any standards, is a fine Zen poem.

Though satori and death figure heavily in Zen poetry, most of the poems deal with nature and man's place in it. Simply put, the Buddha-Nature is by no means peculiar to man. It is discoverable in all that exists,

animate or inanimate. As Arthur Waley puts it in his 'Zen Buddhism and its Relation to Art': "Stone, river and tree are alike parts of the great hidden Unity. Thus man, through his Buddha-nature or universalized consciousness, possesses an intimate means of contact with nature. The songs of birds, the noise of waterfalls, the rolling of thunder, the whispering of wind in the pine-trees — all these are utterances of the Absolute."

Perhaps in this poem by Ryokan (1757-1831) the Zen spirit is perfectly caught:

Without a jot of ambition left
I let my nature flow where it will.
There are ten days of rice in my bag
And, by the hearth, a bundle of firewood.
Who prattles of illusion or nirvana?
Forgetting the equal dusts of name and fortune,
Listening to the night rain on the roof of my hut,
I sit at ease, both legs stretched out.

The Vision of God — Your Original Face before you were born

From JACOB BOEHME

Disciple: How may I come to the supersensual life, that I may see God, and hear Him speak?

Master: When thou canst throw thyself but for a moment into THAT where no creature dwelleth, then thou hearest what God speaketh.

D.: Is that near at hand, or far off?

M.: It is in thee, and if thou canst for a while cease from all thy thinking and willing, thou shalt hear unspeakable words of God.

D.: How can I hear, when I stand still from thinking and willing.

M.: When thou standest still from the thinking and willing of self, then the eternal Hearing, Seeing and Speaking will be revealed in thee; and so God heareth and seeth through thee: thine own hearing,

willing and seeing hindreth thee, that thou dost not see nor hear God.

D.: Wherewithal shall I hear and see God, being He is above nature and creature?

M.: When thou art quiet or silent, then thou art that which God was before nature and creature, and whereof He made thy nature and creature: then thou hearest and seest with that wherewith God saw and heard in thee, before thy own willing, seeing and hearing began.

D.: What hindereth or keepeth me back that I cannot come to that?

M.: Thy own willing, hearing and seeing: And because thou strivest against that out of which thou art come, thou breakest thyself off with thy own willing from God's willing.

— (Boehme 1575-1624
Of the Supersensual Life, 1-5).

THE MIRACLE OF THE QURAN

By

ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

MOHAMMAD did not work miracles. Instead, the Divine Grace flowing through him created the Quran. It is, indeed, stated therein, in reply to demands for miracles, that its verses were the signs that he brought, which is the more pointed as their name, 'ayat', means 'sign' and therefore 'miracle'. Towards the beginning of his testimony, before he had yet been expelled from Mecca for bearing it, he hung up ten verses from the Quran in the Kaaba, where it was the custom of poets to exhibit their works, with a challenge to any who doubted their divine inspiration to produce others the like of them; and that in a language and a race famed for its poetry.

The impact of this book composed through the instrumentality of a man who was already forty years of age when it began, was illiterate and had never composed a thing, was stupendous. It was a new literary form, a kind of rhythmical rhymed prose. Already in Mohammed's lifetime there were people who could recite the whole of it by heart and could have replaced it if all the texts had been destroyed: and there have been ever since. Hafiz or 'guardian' such a one is called. Therefore the claim of some hostile Western critics that the original texts were in a scattered and fragmentary condition means little.

Through the influence of this book the Arabic of the time of King Alfred and Charlemagne, before any of the languages of present-day Europe had evolved, is still the classical language of Arabic lands today. Local dialects have, of course, diverged from it, but not enough to prevent it being spoken, read and understood. And throughout the whole Islamic world portions of the Quran are recited five times a day by those who fulfil their obligations.

It is emphatically stated in the Quran that it is not poetry, and those who speak of

it as such are denounced. In order to understand this it is necessary to see what the term 'poetry' conveyed to the Arabs of Mohammad's time. It did not imply, on the one hand, divine revelation, nor, on the other, the tepid imagination and banal observation of life and nature that so often goes by the name today. Lyric and narrative poetry were flourishing and its creators were apt to be ecstatics. As among various other ancient peoples, they were something like present-day mediums, possessed by familiar spirits, similar to the 'controls' of the mediums. These might even overpower them and speak through them. When, therefore, it was known that Mohammad fell into a trance in which portions of the Quran were revealed to him, which he recited on coming round, it was natural that some should declare that this was the same thing. It was in fact quite different because it was no familiar spirit that revealed the verses to Mohammad but the Angel Gabriel, that is the Spirit of Divine Revelation. And their form and content differed accordingly.

Incidentally, the malicious suggestion of some Western critics that Mohammad 'fraudulently' concocted the Quran or some parts of it, only pretending to have heard them in trance, is, from a purely literary point of view (apart from all other considerations) rather like accusing Milton of 'fraudulently' concocting 'Paradise Lost'. There is a difference, of course, because Milton was a poet, whereas Mohammad was not.

Translation of great work of literature is always difficult but perhaps more so with the Quran than any other. In the first place, it is not divided systematically according to subject, as a thesis or exposition in the Western sense of the word would be. A legal injunction such as to draw up a document testified to by two witnesses when taking a

loan may be followed by an affirmation of Divine Omniscience, then by an encouragement to the faithful and a warning to unbelievers and evil-doers; this again by a reference to one of the prophets. In fact it has to be read and pondered passage by passage and often verse by verse. Then again, there are many topical allusions which would be lost on the modern reader without footnotes. And it is both cryptic and symbolical. For instance, an ejaculation such as "And the stars!" Is it to be translated: "And behold the stars!" or "Consider the stars!" or "What of the stars?" or "I swear by the stars!"? But the greatest difficulty is purely linguistic. That, however,

means more than semantic, since turns of phrase cover and mould turns of thought. For instance, the saying "To God do we belong and to Him do we return" does not strike one as particularly noteworthy; and yet the power and beauty of the original Arabic and its suggestion of utter surrender are such that it is often used as an incantation.

Muslims do not forbid or discourage translation, but for worship and ritual the original Arabic has to be used. In fact the only way of reading the Quran satisfactorily is to master at least enough Arabic to read the original text side by side with a fairly literal translation.

Garlands of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

57. Experiencing the unbroken oneness of pure space,
One sees no separate pot at all.
From seeming movement of the seeming pot
What folly to infer
Movement of the space within the pot!
58. In the plenitude of Self-awareness
Body and world are seen no more;
Because of their apparent changes
How foolish to conclude
That the Self is mutable!
59. Vast, whole, immutable, the Self,
Reflected in the mind's distorting mirror.
May seem to move.
Know it is the image moving,
Never the Self.
60. How can delusive darkness ever touch
The Self, the One without a second?
This the mind's divisive vision brings.
Nothing but bright Awareness is the Self.
61. Only the mind deluded and drawn outward
By *maya's* might beholds the body.
The true Self knows it not.
How may this Pure Awareness
Be called the body's owner?
62. Only to the ego in the body
The world of moving and unmoving things
Appears as the other.
Where there is no world, no God,
In this absence of another,
How and whereof
Can the Self be called the witness?
63. Without the body, the world is not.
Without mind, the body is not.
Without awareness, mind is not,
And without being there is no Awareness.

THE MESSAGE OF THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

.....

By
Sir GEORGE TREVELYAN

Acknowledgment: I gladly give credit for the original inspiration for this essay in a pamphlet by my friend Ernest Gabrielson, called "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam with interpretation".

SOME KEY VERSES

1. Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight
And lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's turret in a Noose of Light.
2. Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
'Awake my little ones, and fill the cup
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry'.
3. And as the cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted 'Open then the Door!'
You know how little while we have to stay,
And once departed may return no more.
7. Come, fill the cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling;
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly — and lo! the Bird is on the Wing.
13. Look to the Rose that blows about us — 'Lo',
'Laughing' she says, 'into the World I blow;
At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.'
16. Think — in this batter'd Caravanseraï
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.
20. Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
To-Day of past Regrets and future Fears —
Tomorrow? why, Tomorrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.
28. With them the Seed of Wisdom I did sow,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd
'I came like Water, and like Wind I go'.

37. Ah, fill the Cup — what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet :
Unborn To-Morrow, and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if To-Day be sweet !
38. One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste —
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing — Oh, make haste !
40. You know, my Friends, how long since in my House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse :
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.
41. For 'Is' and 'Is-Not' though with Rule and Line,
And 'Up-and-Down' without, I could define,
I yet in all I only cared to know
Was never deep in anything but — Wine.
43. The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute :
The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.
44. The mighty Mahmud, the Victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.
47. And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in — Yes —
Then fancy while thou art, Thou art but what
Thou shalt be — Nothing — Thou shall not be less.
50. The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes ;
And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
He knows about it all — He knows — HE knows !
73. Ah Love ! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire !
74. Ah Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heaven is rising once again ;
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me — in vain !
75. And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy *joyous* Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one — turn down an empty Glass !

GR^{EAT} mythology and poetry enshrines eternal truths about the nature of man and the allegorical journey of the human soul through the dark forests or stormy seas of life on earth. The basic allegory is always the same. All poetic inspiration, all great legends, every fairy story, tell in some form the tale of the eternal being of man, belonging to a timeless realm of light, descending into the temporal sphere of earth, taking to itself a body, forgetting whence and why it came, undergoing soul trials and ordeals and returning through the gateway of so-called death, enriched by experience, to the realm of spirit from which it descended. In a thousand forms this tale is told and it is the truth that our materialistic age most needs to recover. Hence the immense importance of reinterpretation of myths and of poetry, made possible for our intellectual age by our modern psychological and spiritual knowledge.

This essay¹ is an attempt at such interpretation of Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat. It is based on a lecture and is much condensed. Every verse can be analysed to reveal its hidden meaning, but here I must be content with but a brief indication referring the reader back to the text itself. Indeed each verse can be taken as a kind of meditation which goes on revealing rich truths. We must recognise that if spiritual truth speaks in the symbols of poetry, it is even possible that the poet himself is not fully aware of the depth of what he has said. This may well have been so with Fitzgerald.

I will assume that the reader has beside him his copy of the Rubaiyat (or has it by heart) and shall not waste space by full quotations. "By heart" indeed. It is with the thinking of the heart, rather than logical intellect that we apprehend poetical truth. Allegory is invariably hidden by double meaning. The deep spiritual truths never constrain belief. There must be no compulsion to acceptance and therefore we find that the esoteric teachings always have to be uncovered and unravelled. The Rubaiyat is a wonderful example of this, so much so that it is usually treated as the creed of a wine bibber. Often enough teachers in

schools have said in effect: "What wonderful poetry it contains but what bad philosophy to teach the young!" Superficially it seems to say that all life is without meaning, death is annihilation, and therefore let us drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. It does say all this and any who wish to stop there are welcome to do so. "While you live, drink—for once dead you never shall return". That seems explicit enough.

But "Come with old Khayyam", the philosopher, those who are unsatisfied with wine alone. Look deeper and you will see that the whole poem is about life. It is the story of the eternal soul, descending at birth on to the earth plane, living out its life through its spring, summer and autumn until "the angel with his darker draught draws up on thee". Then "take that and do not shrink".

Awake ; Look ; Think ; Listen : These are the four magnificent injunctions which span the poem in verses 1, 8, 16 & 59. Lack of space makes it necessary for me to content myself with interpreting only a few verses and to make categorical statements as to what the symbols mean to me. Remember that every symbol is capable of several interpretations, often apparently contradictory, but if your interpretation brings life-enhancing meaning to you, who dare say that for you it is other than true merely on the ground that he has found a different meaning.

(Marginal Numbers refer to Verses)

1. Let us then bravely look at the opening stanzas in their wider meaning. They picture the descent of souls into birth. The Tavern represents life on earth. The soul is called on to awaken in the dawn of earth consciousness and the stone flung into the bowl of night represents the descent into the realm of the material from the spiritual world. Leaving the "astral" realm is indeed equivalent to "putting the stars to flight".

¹ This is the substance of a lecture given to the Iran Society on Feb. 9th, 1966.

Note that *pre-existence* is assumed. This postulate is of absolute importance to our understanding and would have been naturally accepted, together with plurality of lives, or re-incarnation, by the oriental sage. I use the word 'soul' rather loosely to include the concept of the 'entity' the eternal being of man, the 'ego' in each one of us, which takes upon itself the sheath of a living body in order to experience life on earth. This entity, being eternal, was there before birth, and is released at death to return to the light filled planes from which it descended. There is no such thing as death in the sense of extinction of the entity.

2. At the moon gate of birth a voice within the tavern invites the young souls to enter and awaken and fill the cup of their body with the wine of consciousness "before life's liquor in its cup be dry". There will be no awakening or birth unless we allow the etheric forces of life to flood into our being. Throughout the poem Omar is speaking of the Wine of Life, and the cup, is the ensouled body to be filled with this consciousness. It is what Jesus meant in saying "I am the true vine, ye are the branches. He that drinketh of my Wine shall never thirst".

3. The souls, urged to plunge into earth consciousness, cluster round the tavern door calling for entry.

"You know how little while we
have to stay
And once departed may return
no more".

It is so often assumed that this couplet shows Omar's disbelief in survival. Not at all! It is spoken by the *personalities*, which as earth vehicles do not as such survive. The true *individuality* is eternal and Omar of course knew this, though we forget it in our descent to earth and entry into the Tavern. There is much that we must experience during our short sojourn on earth and already there is a sense of urgency.

7. "The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly — and lo the bird is on the wing".

16. Life on earth is likened to a battered caravanserai with two doors, the birth portal of entry and the gate of departure at death. Here enter all kinds of men. Note the personalities are already developed through earlier lives and planes of consciousness. Some already therefore enter as sultans.

Now we come to the crux of the whole poem and its basic teaching.

"Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that
clears
Today of past regrets and future
fears".

Once we have lifted our thinking above the preconception that this is merely an invitation to drink, we recognise that it is the central problem for us all in developing a courageous and creative attitude to our lives in a difficult age. What is it that disturbs us all with negative emotion other than remorse and regret over past opportunities missed and deeds ill done, or anxiety about an unknowable future? The Cup offered is the 'Eternal Now', the present moment. Fill that, learn to live only in that, and we lift ourselves through our own initiative into the positive emotions of love, joy and courage.

We can at will jettison negative thinking and emotion and "sacrifice our sorrows." If we could really live only in the present time, freed from self and its clutter of 'past regrets and future fears', we could really make changes and free choices. It is the great challenge for creative development and modern psychology. It is also the way to surrendering the will to the guidance of higher beings, which in our culture means the entry of the Christ power into our lives.

Why fret about "unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday" when we have this splendid hope and joyful task in the living moment.

23. "Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend" before we abandon our bodies (not our souls) to the dust —

"Dust into dust and under dust,
to lie Sans wine, sans song, sans
singer and — sans end".

This *appears* to say that everything ends with death. In truth it urges us to develop our talents before we lose the body, that instrument for sense experience, but when that worn-out tool is cast away to dust the eternal core of man moves on to that plane of consciousness to which truly there is *no end*.

27. Omar "when young did eagerly frequent Doctor and Saint and heard great argument". But he has found a truth which he attempts to teach *them*, and the harvest of wisdom he reaps is contained in a marvellously enigmatic sentence "I came like water and like wind I go". Read this in the sense that "the spirit bloweth where it listeth", and
28. that Water is always the symbol of Life.

29. The soul, cast on the waters of life on earth, is blown around, "the why not knowing", and "without asking whither hurried hence". It has forgotten the high purpose which it chose, with Divine guidance, before its descent to earth. The vagaries of life may appear to be an impertinence on the part of the fates. After a number of lives
30. ("another and another Cup") it will reach the stage of seeing how Destiny is working and will learn to accept fate, seeing meaning in all that happens — "drown the memory of that (fancied) Impertinence".

31. Then Omar describes his quest for the eternal truths. All hero legends are concerned with the soul which takes upon itself the task of exploring up into the ethereal realms of eternal spirit to bring back to his fellow men some elixir of life (Golden Fleece, precious

diadem, Holy Grail) which may prove the truth of the Higher Worlds. So in meditation he rises through the gates of Knowledge into planetary wisdom, but still finds that there is a veil beyond which he cannot yet see. As yet he has not found the key (but see verse 35 — "of my base metal may be filed a key"). While the soul is on earth, seeing through a glass darkly, the heavens exhort it to use its *understanding*, albeit blinded by the obscuration of matter

32. (Awake! Think! Listen again!)

We taste of the well of earth consciousness only for a little minute out of the wider life on the eternal planes.

38. "The stars are setting and the caravan Starts for the Dawn of Nothing — Oh make haste".

A sense of urgency is creeping into the poem. Our time in the battered Caravanserai is coming to an end. We with our soul companions must start for the journey to that realm beyond Things, that realm of pure Being entered after death. We start for the Dawn of No-Thing, and many of us are going to do this quite unprepared. Oh make haste! This is a verse of tremendous impact once we have seen what the poem is really saying — and it applies to the lot of us, now. 'This is the marvel of the allegorical symbols. Being timeless they appeal directly to our modern consciousness and to each of us personally.

47. Link this verse with the wonderful verse 47, which at first glance appears to be pure negation and then on a deeper level is revealed as a magnificent life affirmation. Note the exultant impact that comes from the mysterious interpolation of the word YES. Your love and life here culminates in the return to the eternal realm of pure being, which is "the No-Thing all things end in", the transmutation of matter into the world of spirit and creative Idea from which all 'things' descended. While

earth-bound, use your Imagination (fancy) to understand that in essence "thou art but what thou shalt be — nothing (but pure Being). Thou shalt not be less". It is the gravest mistake to think 'death' means extinction of individual consciousness or entity. To quote the Duke in Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure", modern man is "most ignorant of what he's most assured — his glassy essence" — that is his spiritual, supersensible, ethereal core. This, the Individuality, survives and is eternal.

32. The talk of "me and thee" in verse 32 refers of course to the earthly personalities which do indeed fade.

Of course Love is the key, open-

5. 8. hearted unfocussed love of all life and
13. 18. with it the joy of free giving of the
48. 70. self. This is the repeated symbol of
72. the Rose in spring which runs like a golden thread through the poem. 'Look to the Rose' and give your love with the same selfless abandon; (13) and the nightingale cries "Wine, Wine, red wine" to the rose (6).

By now we can grasp the real meaning of the two 'repentance' verses, 7 and 70. The first

7. "In the fire of spring
The winter garment of repentance
fling",
70. and its autumnal counterpart --

"was I sober when I swore repentance?"
.....

"And then came spring and Rose
in Hand
My Threadbare penitence apieces
tore".

Here we have another double meaning, outwardly the sensual cavalier rejecting the puritan in his nature and more deeply the joyous rising in the heart of the love which enables us to live in the moment, freed from all craven or pious regrets about the past or melancholy orthodoxy. Then, in total absence of

negative emotion, we can create love and joy and courage in the heart.

Now look at the series of verses 39 — 44, reading Wine and the Grapes our symbol for Life and Light and Love. Instead of getting embroiled in earth affairs or sterile philosophy, Omar strives to open the soul to the real beauty of life and the joy of direct and immediate contact with the spirit, drinking the wine from the cup God has given him, with thankfulness and joy.

40. The soul has rejected "barren reason" and has entered into a more fruitful marriage — with the Daughter of the Vine in the sense used by Christ and the great Masters of all religions. The longing is expressed in St. Thomas Aquinas' prayer, "Load me with the gifts of the Spirit during my exile here and inebriate my soul with Thy Joy". Radhakrishnan writes "The oldest wisdom in the world tells us that we can consciously unite with the divine while in the body; for this is man really born".

It is very interesting to count the small number of verses actually about drinking and wine. An enormous proportion of the 75 verses are about matters which would be very tedious for the toper. The major part of the poem simply is not about quaffing earthly wine. The group of drinking verses 39-44 are of extraordinary importance in our reading of the poem. The Grape and Wine is taken always as the pure contact with the spiritual sources of life available to every seeking soul in the immediate moment, if the will can be freely opened to the higher guidance. This is the joy offered by Jesus the Christ, but we need not be disturbed that our poem is written by a Persian sage. The Christ, the Christos, is the same exalted Being, recognised by all the religions as the Lord of the Spiritual Sun behind the physical sun, whom the Persians knew as Ahura

Mazda. "I am the light of the world. I am the true bread and wine of Life". The aim of our sojourn here is to surrender the self in freedom to His Love.

41. Intellect and logic could weigh and measure things but the only knowledge which Omar really minded about was that which pointed the way, with joy, to direct contact with the spiritual sources. He was "never deep in anything but Wine". This line is a splendid example of the double meanings.
42. Late in life, having matured through the allegory of Spring and Summer, Omar understands more deeply the meaning of this true Wine and his guardian angel, preparing him for the transition called death, brings him the vintage of his life. This light of Divine Love, this true Wine, can transmute
43. life's leaden metal into Gold, confuting all sectarian disputes and arguments about religious matters. Remember that the Alchemists were only in outward seeming concerned with making the physical metal gold. This was a symbolical process covering their real purpose of transmuting the soul, bringing about the mystical marriage between the personality and its higher spiritual self. This is the lesson of the great myths and allegories. This is Omar's passionate quest through life with an ardour which, as he reveals in verses 69 and 71, has often damaged his worldly reputation. He has discovered, however, that one glimpse
56. of the True Light caught, by direct contact with the spirit, in the midst of ordinary life, is better than all the rituals he found deadening in orthodox religion.
55. Verse 44 is a tremendous statement relevant to our time in our Christian world, if we change Mahmud into Michael, the archangel standard bearer of the Christ, wielder of the sword of light. It is he whom we can invoke to scatter the "misbelieving and black horde of fears and sorrows that infest the soul".

50. With great earnestness Omar urges us to recognise that the apparent harshness of destiny is only an illusion while we are experiencing the limitations of the earth plane. The Divine Master of our Destiny (for us the Christ) has apparently tossed us down to be struck around like a polo ball. But note with what urgency the final line is stressed—"He knows about it all—He knows—HE knows". We must for lack of space, leave the magnificent meditation on the cosmic destiny of man, his fall and redemption, suggested in verses 51—58.

The Epilogue 'Kuza-Nama' gives a profound allegory on life through the symbol of pottery. Omar, before his death, "one morning at the close of Ramazan, ere the better moon arose", looks back as an old man and contemplates the way in which the bodies and personalities are shaped in earth substance :

"Who is the Potter pray, and who the Pot?"

How far are we all responsible on a deeper Karmic level for the differences and even the deformities of our bodies? The pots (bodies) talk together discussing why they have developed such varied forms. Surely there must be purpose behind it all? Then in excitement they hear that the Porter is coming and see the crescent new moon through the opening door. They are to be ensouled again and the wine of life is to fill them.

68. Omar must now leave the beauties and experiences of earth life. His search for the spiritual has so refined his coarser being through subtler influences of soul that the *true believer* passing by the place where his ashes are buried will be caught by a "snare of perfume". This verse should give pause to any who think Omar is a mere sensualist!
74. The final two verses are deeply moving. With the coming of 'death', the true

Moon of Heaven is rising once again and the soul is to be released to the world of ethereal light. I am, says Omar, leaving the delights of the earth garden and my friends and fellow guests in the Caravanserai.

75. And it is a *joyous*, not melancholy, errand for the Being who "with shining-foot shall pass among the guests star-scattered on the grass". Here in memory of me, turn down an empty glass to show I have drunk to the dregs that which earth consciousness can offer.

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I make no claim whatever to Omar scholarship nor have I any idea how widely such interpretation is already accepted.

Not for a moment would I argue with those who find this form of interpretation unacceptable, but to those to whom it appeals I say: Live with these verses, meditate upon them, let them work on you and their beauty and wisdom will reveal itself to you. Each will then discover his own interpretations. Fitzgerald's re-creation of the 12th Century poet philosopher has given us a work of art of deep meaning for our own time.

The *real* philosophy in the Rubaiyat, not the superficial, matters more now than ever, in these years of important human destiny.

It is not enough merely to re-read the poem. We must make it alive in us and

then it will actually bring about a spiritual change. You cannot 'live' the Rubaiyat and remain the same person, since it is a mantram that releases the imprisoned splendour from within the heart. The Master on his "joyous errand", offers us the "ruby vintage".

"Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that
clears

Today of past regrets and future
fears"

This is not merely for our personal irresponsible enjoyment. It is the major psychological step that each of us can consciously take in becoming fully mature and responsible adults. It is this attitude of positive emotion, of "risen thinking", that makes it possible for us really to co-operate with the spiritual world. In our crumbling world this is the urgent task which each of us is called on to achieve. After we have "shattered it to bits" it is in very truth through the power of love that the awakened souls, acknowledging the living whole, will

73.

"grasp the sorry scheme of things
entire" and

"remould it nearer to the heart's
desire".

Love is the gravity force of the New Age — but make haste.

"What boots it to repeat
That time is slipping underneath
our feet"

AWAKE! — THINK! — LOOK!
LISTEN AGAIN!

Every time you establish by proof the negation of a thing in reference to God you become more perfect, while with every additional positive assertion you follow your imagination and recede from true knowledge of God.

— MAIMONIDES on *The Negative Theology*.

THE HEAVENLY SONG OF DANTE

By
GLADYS DE MEUTER

DANTE ALIGHIERI was born in Florence in May 1265. Of his youth we know little except what is recorded in 'Vita Nuova' where Dante tells of his love for Beatrice, daughter of Folco Portinari. After her death in June 1290, Dante immersed himself in philosophy.

'A poet of rectitude', as he himself declared in 'De Vulgari Eloquentia', Dante opposed the intrigue and depravity prevalent in Italy at the time, with the result that he was exiled on the trumped-up charge of barratry. He never returned to his native Florence, and his ashes repose at Ravenna.

Outstanding among Dante's works is the 'Divine Comedy' which is composed of one hundred cantos, divided into three canticles — Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso.

In 'Convito' Dante states that the Scriptures should be expounded anagogically, that is, spiritually. Dante explains that when Scripture is understood in its literal sense it must also be accorded its mystical interpretation. He cites an example — when the Israelites left Egypt, the land of Judea was said to have been made free and pure. This is literally true, but it also possesses a spiritual meaning, namely, that when the soul departs from bondage, it is liberated from ignorance and rendered holy. In this way sacred Scripture reveals the 'spirit' within the 'letter' of the lesson.

Regarding his work the 'Divine Comedy' Dante records in a missive to Can Grande 'Relinquishing all subtle investigation, we may sum up the whole of my 'Comedy' by naming as its object the liberation of souls from sorrow in this life, in order to raise them towards the heights of heavenly Bliss.'

Dante conceived of divine Truth as being inherent in the consciousness of man, but the

latter through error, participates only partly in divine Being; man's destiny is therefore ordained to be a return to Eden aided by the loving guidance of Grace. In the 'Comedy' the soul's inner powers are summoned as guides to lead the pilgrim to the supreme wisdom of Self-Knowledge.

Those who view the 'Divine Comedy' solely from its poetic viewpoint deprive the work of its very life-vein; for it is infused with a radiant spiritual vision which illumines the whole structure of the poem. To deny it this spiritual luminosity would be to expose only the shell of the masterpiece. Dante perceives Being not only in Its imperceptibility, but also clothed with the vesture of matter; thus matter and spirit form an indivisible Unity which is rooted in Universal Order and Harmony.

In the 'Comedy's' cosmology the earth is situated at the centre of the universe, and Lucifer's abode is deep inside the earth; that part of land which was pushed upwards by Satan's tunnelling, forms the mountain of Purgatory at the summit of which lies the earthly paradise. The true Paradises or Celestial Spheres are placed according to the heavenly bodies contained within them; they are, the seven planets, followed by the sphere of Fixed Stars, the Crystalline heaven and the Empyrean.

The concentric motion of the spheres stems from an intense craving to be united with God, and it is the angelic Intelligences which relay this motion to the lower spheres, while the all-embracing Empyrean where the 'Eternal Light' is revealed in Its clear shining, remains ever motionless.

The whole story of the Inferno takes place between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, when Christ Himself 'descended into Hell.' The canto begins with the solemn

aloneness of Dante the 'living soul' in a dark wood when he prepares to embark upon his solitary and arduous journey. As Dante sets out the 'sun was rising with those stars which were with it when Love Divine first set those beauteous things in motion.' So does the soul waken at the first light of the spiritual dawn.

Making his way over a barren slope Dante is suddenly held in the grip of fear as the leopard of lust, the lion of pride and the she-wolf of envy prepare to attack him. Dante calls for aid, and Reason in the form of Virgil appears at his side, addressing him in a voice which appears 'faint from long silence.' Dante's acceptance of Virgil as Guide indicates his inner submission to a higher power.

As Dante proceeds along the mystical journey, Virgil relates how Beatrice, the embodiment of heavenly Truth and Love, asked him to lead Dante away from error. Throughout the perilous odyssey it is this inner Light of Grace which enables Dante to carry on.

Among those 'shades' encountered in the Netherworld are the lukewarm who wax neither hot nor cold; those in whom natural passion over-rode self-restraint; the gluttonous, the prodigals and the wrathful.

Within the devil-garrison of the City of Dis dwell those souls who have wilfully rejected Grace; and here Dante is powerless before the dark hosts. Aware of their peril Virgil shelters his charge, but he, like Dante, awaits divine aid. Then comes 'one from Heaven sent,' and before this angelic emissary, the diabolical ones are rendered mute with fear, offering no further resistance to the passage of Reason and the soul. Before the Omnipotence of Reality the shadow-power of ignorance melts away. Dante now encounters the Minotaur, symbol of unrestrained violence, who presides over that sphere where suffer those who have employed brute force. Their torment is dreadful, but their plight does not move Dante as do the suicides who have cut short their terrestrial life thread. These unfortunates have

allowed the harpies of fear to rend and tear at Hope, leaving despair the victor.

The lower depths must be plumbed before the heights may be scaled, and the pilgrim expresses his understanding of this when he says: 'I leave the bitter and hasten to the succulent fruits promised me by my truthful guide; but first it is expedient that I descend to the Centre.'

Whenever fear assails him, Dante invokes the aid of the Master, who tells him: 'I will not have thee afraid.' This admonition imparts fortitude to Dante who casts fear from him. Proceeding on his way the Truth-seeker meets up with the hypocrites, those 'phantoms' weighed down by that 'wearisome cloak', among whom is Caiaphas the High Priest. Here the Master takes his pupil up in his arms and carries him away from such dire peril, and Dante expresses his love for the Sage by relating how he closely followed the 'imprints of those beloved feet.'

Experiencing the leaden burden of weariness Dante wishes to interrupt his journey, but his wise Master bids him bestir himself: 'Now must thou put indolence away from thee.' Dante learns that spiritual effort is necessary, for 'there is yet a longer stair which awaits ascending.' Despondency also to be avoided, and the reassuring words of the Guide fall sweetly on the heart's ear: 'Banish sadness, and bear in mind that I am ever with thee.'

During the course of their journeying, Dante allows his attention to be caught by clamorous conversation, whereupon he is told by Virgil that 'the craving to listen is a base craving.' Thus rebuked, Dante is made aware of the strict necessity of concentrating fully on Reality, and not allowing the mind to be distracted by phantasies.

Upon entering the realm of Treachery, Dante beholds its icy grip on the souls there, for cold-blooded treachery robs the soul of heart-warmth rendering it reptilian in nature.

Finally in the deepest dungeon, Dante stands in the chained and ice-bound presence

of Satan himself. The pilgrim is terrified by this awesome experience, as tears and bloody foam indicative of anguished wrath, proceed from the Prince of Darkness. Satan the embodiment of Ignorance possesses three faces which testify to his blasphemy against the Holy Trinity of Power — Wisdom — Love. The evil countenances are dyed with the varying shades of hatred, impotence and anger. Face to face with Lucifer, Dante feels 'chilled and weakened', but he winds his arms about Virgil's neck, signifying his total reliance on Reason, and making use of Satan as a ladder in compliance with the Sage's words: 'by these steps must we depart from so much wickedness,' Master and pupil leave Inferno.

'He preceding, and I following,' Dante is led by Reason away from the abyss of ignorance. Made aware of Sin's impotence Dante fears it no more; he is now ready for the ascent towards purification and heavenly delights. As Virgil and Dante leave the den of iniquity they behold the radiant light of the stars.

Purgatorio

It is Easter morning when Dante follows Virgil to the shore of Mount Purgatorio where the Master tenderly removes the tears from Dante's face, and girds him with a rush. This ritual symbolises the heavenly cleansing which descends upon the soul when it is girt with humble self-surrender.

Here in Purgatory, Reason is no longer the sure guide he was in Inferno, and it is by the Light of the spiritual Sun that Virgil and Dante now proceed.

Emerging in full sunshine Dante becomes conscious of his ego-shadow for the first time; he learns that 'the human frame' is the cause for 'the sunshine being divided,' and Reason discloses to him that the ego-consciousness is merely a reflection — an error which cleaves in two the shining unity of Truth.

The ascent of Master and pupil is bathed in sunlight, a foreshadowing of that Eternal Light of which the prophet Isaiah wrote:

'Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.'

But Dante, undergoing purification, experiences for a while the withdrawal of Grace's Light; during this 'dark night of the soul' the pilgrim learns how to possess his soul in patience, and to hope for the clear shining of the new dawn.

Intent on following his Guide, Dante is suddenly assailed by a subtle form of ignorance in the shape of a serpent which comes upon him in the region of dreams. Conscious of his helplessness Dante places his trust in divine deliverance and his faith is promptly rewarded as two angels armed with blunt swords put the enemy to flight. Through this experience Dante learns that those forces which lie latent deep in the subconscious, must be faced with implicit faith in God.

Presently Saint Lucy, symbol of the clear light of spiritual understanding, makes her appearance and leads the way to the gate of the true Purgatory, where the warder clad in penitential ashes and carrying the 'sword of wisdom', allows entry only to those pilgrims who possess the gold and silver keys of spiritual knowledge and heavenly forgiveness. Before arriving at the gate Dante ascends the three steps of Power, Wisdom, Love, which are the attributes of the Blessed Trinity.

Pursuing his way through Purgatory the light of understanding gradually dawns on Dante and he is shown that the root of disharmony lies in 'unwise loving.' He learns that the cause of inharmony is to be sought within, not externally. One penitent tells him: 'If the world at present appears to go awry, the cause is to be found in you; seek it therefore within yourself. . . . From the Divine Hand whose paternal glance is upon it before it issues forth . . . the young soul, knowing nothing turns towards that which affords it pleasure. At first it partakes of a little good, then it is lured in another direction and strays after it unless its love is restrained and curbed . . . true observation

will reveal to you that the cause of error lies in being misguided. . . .'

Passing from one schoolroom of Purgatory to another, Dante is severely tested as the temptations of the flesh come to him in the guise of an alluring Siren before whose lovely aspect Dante is entranced. But Wisdom's 'pure' and true vision comes to the pilgrim's aid, and reveals to him the Siren's genuine hideous aspect before which Dante recoils in horrified disgust.

Having traversed the terraces of the proud, the envious, the avaricious and the gluttonous, Dante finds that his path is obstructed by a wall of flames besides which stands an angel singing: 'Blessed be the pure in heart.' Conscious of the torrid heat of the fire which purges lust, Dante refuses to enter it, but Virgil gently explains to him that Beatrice awaits him beyond the flames. At this, Dante's consent is won and he follows the lead of his faithful Guide who has already preceded him into the fire. Answering Beatrice's Love-call, Dante willingly offers himself to the purificatory flames; where Reason fails to persuade, Love ever conquers. Once within the fire, Dante experiences great suffering, but he is comforted by a 'voice which sings beyond.' After the ordeal, when Dante is granted respite, he has a dream in which a beauteous maiden named Leah sings of herself and her fair sister Rachel, who is content with 'seeing' instead of 'doing'. This dream is a foreshadowing of that revelation which will come to the pilgrim of the beauty of both the 'active' and 'contemplative' life.

And now the time is at hand when Virgil, exemplifying the Light of Reason, must take leave of Dante who is now a purified soul. Solemnly Virgil says: 'Over thyself do I crown and mitre thee.' Henceforth Dante must follow the dictates of a higher power.

Entering the forest of the earthly paradise Dante is enraptured by a vision in which he beholds the soul's pristine and chaste loveliness. This bewitching lady accompanies him as he faces the sacred East, and together they view a splendid

pageantry in which are the symbolic forms whereby divine revelation comes to the soul. The highlight of the pageant is when Beatrice appears before Dante; she who represents the gracious spirit of heavenly Truth. Fulfilling her role, Beatrice provides Dante with deeper insight into his own heart, and this self-revelation aids his inner unfoldment. Dante then receives intimation of how chaos and disharmony come about. When the 'spiritual' symbolised by the Church, covets the things of the world represented by Imperial Rome, the harmony which should reign between the spiritual and material worlds is disrupted. Dante is shown the mystical chariot of the Church taken over by the harlot of covetousness. She mates with the giant of undisciplined power, who, in order to possess her completely, detaches the chariot from the tree which signifies terrestrial world order, and bears the chariot away with him into the wood. In this way Dante learns that lust for earthly power is the downfall of the spiritual in man, for the pure soul is defiled by the unclean craving for 'outer things'. Thus man transgresses the divine command: 'Render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar that which is Caesar's.'

Accompanying Beatrice beyond the shadows of the forest at noon, Dante rejoices in his completed purgation. He leaves the earth led by the heavenly spirit of Truth, to wend his way towards those celestial spheres which lie beyond time and space. Having toiled upwards from the depths of Hell through the bleak and arduous road of Purgatory, Dante now experiences a singing in his heart as wings of divine Grace bear him towards the radiant stars.

Paradiso

Natural Reason having led Dante to enjoy the loving guidance of Beatrice, the mystical journey of 'mind and heart' is continued, illumined by the Light of Grace.

The yearning for heavenly truths quickens Dante's inner being, and as his absorption in Beatrice's loveliness deepens, he is elevated to greater heights of spiritual awareness, and

welcomed into the 'Pearl of Eternity' which is the Sphere of the Moon. In this heaven Beatrice expounds to Dante the Divine Order which rules the Universe; he learns that the intellect's striving after Truth is good so long as the intellect recognises its limitations. In Truth's dazzling, mystical smile Dante understands that her true aspect is ever veiled from human reason. Because those souls of the blessed who appear to Dante in the Moon-sphere possess nebulous forms, he mistakes them for shadows, for which error he is rebuked. Dante, like Narcissus who took the shadow for substance, is misled by appearances through lack of spiritual perception.

Entranced by that Light which 'vivifies love,' Dante is translated to the Sphere of Mercury where he is instructed in the sacredness of vows and how actions may be marred by self-seeking.

Guided ever inwards to the radiant Core of Being, Dante realizes that the souls which he encounters in these heavenly Spheres are not sojourners there, but are themselves being drawn towards their ultimate destiny — that of at-one-ment with their Source.

Among those who hold converse with Dante is the Emperor Justinian who represents that Roman Law which had as its origin 'not force but divine reason.'

As Dante becomes increasingly aware of Truth's fair countenance, he is drawn ever closer to the Heart Divine. The next Sphere to enfold him in iridescent splendour is Venus, Star of Love where temperance reigns. Here, those lovers who once directed their love-beams imperfectly now eagerly place their angelic hearts upon the sacred altar of Perfect Love.

From Venus Dante is elevated to the Sphere of the Sun where 'they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.' Mantled with the golden rays of divine Knowledge the Church Fathers and Theologians make themselves known to Dante. In their presence he experiences wonderful calm and elevation of spirit, and as the celestial music of the spheres vibrate in his

soul, Dante is rapt in inner absorption. When he emerges from his ecstatic state it is to receive further revelations from Truth. He is taught that Saint Francis symbolising the Path of Love, and Saint Dominic the Path of Knowledge, are the seraphic and cherubic spirits which form a perfect unity. The loving heart of Il Poverello blends harmoniously with the brilliant intellect of Saint Dominic, for Truth discloses that true Love is wise, just as true Wisdom is love.

Encompassed by dazzling Light, Dante receives initiation into the Sphere of Mars, vivid symbol of fortitude where the hero-saints who have been the martyrs and knights of the Church Militant are seen by Dante. In the heavenly Mars the true soldiers of Christ emerge as those who have valiantly striven for things divine, and not for earthly place and power.

The brilliant glory of Beatrice's eyes bestows upon the lover of Truth a clearer vision of the reality of things, and now Dante finds himself in the Sphere of Jupiter where wise and Just Rulership is exemplified by the Roman Eagle. Here, Dante's thought dwells on the righteousness of those upright souls in whom the Light of divine Justice burns with ardent flame.

Dante is next translated to the Sphere of Saturn where he meets those ascetics whose lives have been dedicated to the calm and divine pursuit of 'interior converse' with their Maker. Wrapped in holy Silence, Dante is withdrawn from thought and plunged into the depths of meditation — having left the 'active' behind, the soul is ready to embrace the 'contemplative' life, in the Heart of which lies the ultimate Vision. From Beatrice, Dante learns that they have reached the 'seventh glory', and he beholds a ladder of gold reaching upwards to the Empyrean beyond. 'Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.'¹

Holy contemplation enables great souls to ascend this sacred stairway, but out of com-

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12.

passion for mankind these wise ones descend from the heights of Bliss to instruct wayward humanity.

Approaching the highest Heaven Dante receives instruction on the 'vita contemplativa' and meets Saint Benedict who symbolizes the lustrous and serene glow of contemplation which reflects inner peace. From Saint Benedict, Dante acquires knowledge of the Eternal Now which reigns in the Empyrean where past and future are non-existent.

On wings of ecstasy Dante is drawn to the Sphere of the Fixed Stars where he receives awareness of the soul's destiny in following the guidance of the divine Light within. From the great height of this Sphere Dante's clear vision pierces the seven planetary heavens below to view the depths which he has left behind, and he is conscious of the insignificance of that transitory self or ego which he once considered so important. With the single eye of Wisdom Dante perceives that heaven and earth bear the seal of divine Goodness, for it is 'la divina bonta che 'l mondo impronta.'

In the eighth heaven Dante is blessed with a vision of the brilliant glory and majesty of Christ, He of whom it is written: 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'² Dante is also shown Mary, beloved mystic Rose in whose chaste and fragrant Heart-Palace the Word made Its abode.

Raised to greater spiritual heights by the Smile of Grace, Dante is questioned by Peter on matters of Faith, and by Saint Thomas on Hope. Beatrice speaks to him of the ego's death: 'It is the gracious Will of our King that you should behold your death face to face in the secret inner Chamber.' Dante is also taught that the task of establishing order in the Universe is entrusted to the Angels, those Messengers of Love who perfume creation with their heavenly breath.

Conscious of an expansion in 'awareness', Dante is enraptured by a vision. He beholds the serene flowing of the River of Grace, and he is bidden by Beatrice to drink of its vivifying waters. As he willingly obeys he

receives enlightenment whereby spiritual truths are unveiled and shown in their pristine light. As Dante's vision unfolds, a luminous circle appears, representing the Eternal Glory of the divine Presence. Before the pilgrim's entranced inner gaze the Empyrean reveals Itself in all its supernatural splendour under the guise of a perfect white Rose — symbol of Divine Love. Mute with wonder, Dante is led by Beatrice into the joyous Heart of the heavenly Flower where beautiful souls appear like sparkling lamps of love, their life and motion derived from Light Eternal. For the pilgrim the Goal is now in sight; having followed Truth with ardent heart and implicit trust, Dante's soul is about to blossom forth into full maturity under the mystic influence of Saint Bernard, symbol of supreme ecstasy.

Beatrice the beloved, has brought Dante to an understanding of love, and obedience to Truth; now the spiritual wings are grown and the soul is about to fly towards that wondrous Beyond where the human tongue and mind cannot follow.

A reverent hush envelops the soul as it is raised by Love Itself to enjoy the Beatific Vision. From within the Heart of Silence Saint Bernard sends forth a Hymn in praise of the Holy Mother, incomparable Vehicle of Grace; and this Blissful Canto discloses to Dante the perfection of that immaculate Womb, in which reposed the Christ-Pearl of the Most High.

As Dante's will fuses with Universal Love, a paean of thanksgiving peals forth from his singing heart: 'like a wheel that steadily whirls, so my will and desire are kept in even motion by that Love Eternal which maintains in divine harmony the sun and the stars.'

Dante's heavenly Song returns to that Starry Realm of Love from whence it came — but the refrain of this celestial Hymn will echo forever in the hearts of the devout, 'O Beauteous One, in Thy Will alone lies our peace.'

² I Cor. i. 24

THE LISTENERS - SILENCE AND SOUND

By
ROBERT HURLEY

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor,
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveler's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveler;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveler's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Aye, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

(1912)

— WALTER DE LA MARE.

THE horse in this poem is like a dull student, chewing gum. All kinds of strange things are going on around him, but he is oblivious; he just moves about, champing the grass, walking on stones and so forth. He is something like the popular idea of the phlegmatic Englishman who goes about his daily affairs in the old way, indifferent to

whatever happens in the world outside his own. He represents all those beings who, pushed ahead by a huge inertia, do not bother to "respond."

The Traveler is one of those anonymous figures who could be anybody. He could be anyone in his journeying life who has start-

ed to ask questions and knock on doors ; who has dropped his usual world and finds himself wandering around in a new environment. But he is only a beginner, too. He knocks, but apparently more in duty than preference. He does not stay long and seems *relieved*, almost, that on one answers his call.

Maybe he feels alarmed to come on so much silence all at once, for silence is the peculiar characteristic of the world of this poem, as noise is of the "normal" world most of us inhabit daily. The silence of the poem is not "dead" silence. It has penetrating power.

The stillness !
Sinking into the rocks,
The voice of the cicada.

We could say that the subject of "The Listeners" is the intersection of sound and silence and of the meaning that each gives to the other. When we are very silent, and a sound comes, it come with meaning in it. Also, silence comes to life when a sound breaks it. In the morning, a crow calls and we feel the peace of that world of air. We understand the purity of the water when we see the fish floating in it.

An old pond.
A frog jumps in.
The sound of the water !

Silence and sound, emptiness and form. If there is no silence, there is no sound. If there is no emptiness, there is no form. A room full of things has not much meaning in it for us, but a room with only one thing, or a few things, does have meaning. The tea ceremony room is not cluttered ; each object has meaning because there are only a few objects and each has a purpose ; each object has meaning, also, because the people attending the ceremony are quiet and so allow the room to come to its own life. Thus, the Traveler's "lonely" cry has a peculiar strength because it comes in an envelope of silence. Thus also, the "sound of iron on stone" at the end of the poem. Every poem about silence is also a poem about sound, every

creative response to form is a response to emptiness.

This world of significance is always present within our world of banalities waiting for us to recognize it. In fact, the world of banalities is the world of significance, but we are usually like the horse of the poem, automatically busy with our fodder, heads bent, consciousness asleep, "champing" away beneath a "starred and leafy sky."

But since we are human beings, we have an *obligation* to explore the fields of being, to knock on strange, old doors, in the middle of nowhere. "Tell them, I came — that I kept my word."

The Traveler does not receive an answer in words to his knocking ; the answer is in the experience of the stillness of waiting for an answer. The answer is the stillness. And, for us, the meaning of the poem is hereabouts. We *must* knock and the answer to our knocking may be only silence, but such a silence as we never "heard" before. Perhaps something else in the poem is the way in which silence and sound are unified. Does it matter so much whether we center ourselves on "form" or on "emptiness," on the "I-I" in the heart or on "clear awareness?" They are not so far apart. Maybe it matters more that we give ourselves wholeheartedly to "listening", listening either to the sound or the silence, but *listening*, attending minutely to the sounds of our lives as they pass through our clear consciousness, or attending to the ocean of stillness in which all forms are always swimming.

The Father uttered one Word ; that
Word is His Son, and he utters
Him for ever in everlasting silence ;
and in silence the soul has to hear it.
— ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

We could hope that the Traveler will keep coming back to that door to knock on it again and again, and each time he will understand better who is knocking and what kind of an answer is coming back to him.

SHAKESPEARE'S MORALITY PLAYS

By

H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

IT is remarkable for how short a period Renaissance drama flourished in England. Its rise, climax and decline all fall within Shakespeare's lifetime. In his youth Mediaeval morality plays were still being acted, while by the end of his life Renaissance drama was decadent already and the theatres were soon to be closed by the Puritans. Shakespeare, in fact, was himself the chief architect of English Renaissance drama. What is seldom realized is that he was, at the same time, the perpetuator of Mediaeval drama, or perhaps it would be better to say its last and supreme exponent.

Let us take a look at the two types of drama.

A morality play was the drama of a man's inner spiritual warfare, leading to his victory or defeat. The characters on the stage quite explicitly represented the warring ingredients in him — greed, pride, humility, fortitude and so forth, with the intervention of angels on one side and devils on the other. That is to say that attention was focussed on what is, for each man, the essential problem of his life, whether he knows it or not: not on any question of social adjustment, but on the use or misuse of his human life, the development or waste of his faculties, the order or chaos of his inner economy, leading to harmonisation or corruption.

Renaissance drama, on the other hand, dealt with purely mundane topics, that is with questions of social adjustment, of the relations between men and women, friends and foes, superiors and inferiors, and so on. This tradition, sometimes called 'humanistic', has been continued ever since. In literature, as in every other department of life, the Renaissance was a turning away from a God-centred to a world-centred attitude to life. In drama, therefore, it was henceforth a man's human relationships and worldly

position that interested people, no longer his inner state. There have been a few exceptions among the greatest poets or dramatists, but very few — Ibsen in his 'Peer Gynt', Goethe in his 'Faust', Tagore in his 'King of the Dark Chamber'. There is no doubt that the Mediaeval drama is more profound, but for modern man it is less interesting. In fact it is only acceptable to him if it is disguised under the form of humanistic drama. That is what Shakespeare did.

Shakespeare was in a unique position. He was captivated by the brilliance of the Renaissance, as every writer is by the spirit of his age. He helped to mould the new age, as every great writer does. And yet at the same time he was imbued with the high seriousness which animated the Mediaeval mind and its interest in the ultimate question, the only ultimate question, of what a man makes of his life. Subject to this dual current of influence, he wrote Mediaeval plays in the Renaissance style, morality plays with real live individuals as the characters in them instead of the conventional types of Mediaeval drama, but morality plays none the less. In doing this, it must be remembered, he was not attempting to revive an abandoned style (no such attempt ever has real life in it, ever really succeeds) but continuing a type of drama which was still current, only clothing it in the style of the new age. And the measure of his success is that, even though deprived of their true profundity by ignorance of symbolism among critics, readers and audiences from his age down to ours, his plays have still remained great.

Actually, they go beyond the ordinary morality plays current in his youth. These deal with the battle of life which every man must willy-nilly fight in himself, whereas Shakespeare is dealing with the great spiritual warfare deliberately entered upon by

those who take up the Quest. The tragedies are dramas of failure in the Quest, the comedies of success.

Some Shakespearean critics have opined that in the period when he was writing the great tragedies Shakespeare was so oppressed with the thought of human inner failure and tragedy that it brought him close to madness. This is probably a great exaggeration, especially as some of his comedies also were written at the same time. Nevertheless, the symbolical interpretation of the tragedies does show how they must have weighed on him. Very few of those who take up the Quest bring it to a successful conclusion. Christ said that many are called but few are chosen. The Bhagavad Gita says that out of thousands perhaps one is called and out of thousands who are called perhaps one is chosen. That is not even one in a million. Symbolical stories of the Quest such as Mallory's 'Morte d'Arthur' show many defeated or captured along the way or abandoning the Quest and very few reaching the goal. To a young man setting forth as one of a fellowship of aspirants in courage and high hope, as Shakespeare must have done, how can it not be depressing to see so many failures along the way, so few holding firmly to the path? But no one with the flame still burning in his heart can allow himself to be discouraged. Shakespeare did not. He perceived the radiance of the goal and his later comedies wrote again of its achievement.

Such statements must be illustrated by examples. Actually, a good deal has been written already about Shakespearean symbolism in *The Mountain Path*. Since some readers may not have the back numbers to hand, I may be forgiven for quoting. In July last year (the issue to which I first became a contributor) there is a beautiful analysis of the symbolism of Hamlet by Sir George Trevelyan.

"Let us look briefly at the tragedy of Hamlet as the hero who failed. . . . He is a highly self-conscious intellectual summoned to undertake the path of regeneration. His task is to take over a kingdom occupied by

a usurping monarch and thereby revenge his father and free his mother from domination by the usurper. Seen allegorically, the kingdom is himself. 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark' — in himself. The false, unaspiring aspect of the personality rules, wedded to his mother, that is to the instinctual nature which is debased and calls for regeneration. In interpreting a myth we must see the whole setting as the personality and all the characters as themes or aspects of it. The temptations and trials reflect the flaws of character to be overcome. Hamlet, a university intellectual, is summoned by an exalted being from the other world. His noble father's spirit in arms (that is his earlier untutored spiritual intuition that was once wedded to his instinctual life before he fell into sophistication) tells him of his warrior task to avenge the murder and redeem his debased mother."

In the following issue, Sir George returns with a profound study of 'The Merchant of Venice'. "In 'The Merchant' we see the rich city of Venice representing the mundane level and the 'beautiful mountain' of Belmont representing the higher plane of awareness where the princess Portia lives. The personality, Bassanio, has to journey there to win and unite with the higher being in himself symbolised by Portia." Particularly telling is the comment on Portia's parting remark after she has played the judge in the lawsuit. "Portia, in disguise, departs with the words: 'I pray you know me when we meet again.' Thus speaks the higher Self to each one of us."

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perished and cannot be revived. Then grief and madness drive him to his death. That is the tragedy of Lear."

Further back, (having been fortunate enough to acquire the back numbers) I found a fine account of the astrological symbolism of 'Twelfth Night' by 'Sagittarius' in April 1965. "The Duke and Olivia are the sun and moon. 'The Duke is lovesick for Olivia, but a sickly, romantic love for a beauty he has never seen. This represents the man who pines nostalgically for the ideal state of a lost childhood or imagined perfection. No such state can be recaptured. The virtual or ideal perfection of childhood cannot be recovered; it must be actualised....Attainment of actualised perfection is brought about by the 'Hermetic marriage', that is by the interposition of Mercury.....between sun and moon. Mercury is the Messenger of the gods. He is equated with intellectual intuition.....Mercury appears as the twin sister and brother, Viola and Sebastian, who intervene between sun and moon, Duke and Olivia. Olivia, the 'moon', the human nature or temperament according to astrology, is the person needing treatment. Her household (horoscope) is in a terrible state of disarray. Sir Toby Belch is the very picture of a degenerate Jupiter—his expansiveness degenerated into gluttony, his magnanimity into boastfulness, his grandeur into riotousness. He is in conjunction with Mars, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in Taurus (as he himself says). Taurus, it will be remembered, is the 'detriment' of Mars, where he is apt to be quarrelsome but cowardly, which is just what Sir Andrew was. Malvolio, a hypocritical Puritan, scheming and coldly ambitious, is just as much a caricature of Saturn as Sir Toby is of Jupiter or Sir Andrew of Mars.....With brilliant wit and technique the twins are introduced into this menage and restore order into it by accomplishing the 'Hermetic Marriage', the male twin wedding Olivia and the female the Duke, while the disordered 'planets' are disciplined and brought to order."

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I could be well moved if I were as you;
If I could pray to move, prayers would
move me;

But I am constant as the northern star.
Of whose true fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,
They are all fire and every one doth shine,
But there's but one in all doth hold his place:
So in the world; 'tis furnished well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and
apprehensive;

Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshak'd of motion: and that I am he.

This is the worst tyranny: the ego claiming to be the Self. A man's faculties revolt against it, reject the discipline unjustifiably imposed upon them—assassinate Caesar.

Brutus is the rational mind, honest but easily duped. Caesar has two main dependents—Antony, the roisterous, passionate, self-indulgent nature, and Brutus, the rational mind; and when the artificial rigour of the ego is rejected it is Antony who wins. Brutus speaks to the people in prose and makes no impression; Antony inflames them against him.

Had Caesar been the true ruler, not a usurper, Brutus would have served him and all been well; but the mind cannot stand alone. Having disapproved of Caesar, Brutus lets himself be swayed by the jealous, malicious, resentful tendency that is Cassius. Thus he loses his integrity. Although he refuses to acquire funds by dishonest means,

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he has to acquiesce in Cassius doing so, since otherwise the army could not be held together. The mind may disapprove of the ego but cannot rule without it, cannot replace it. The failure of Brutus is summed up in a wise saying which is unwise because untimely :

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

When Brutus spoke so wisely he had already missed the tide. That, the point of high tide, was when he addressed the Romans after Caesar's death and allowed

Antony to capture them from him. Caesar could not stand without him, the rebels could not rebel without him, but neither could he stand alone. The mind must be grounded in intuition.

At the end of the play, in place of the grandiose Caesar and the honourable idealistic Brutus we have the self-indulgent Antony allied with the cold, scheming Octavius — a descent from aspiring though unenlightened youth to caution but egoistic middle age. When the young man who thought he could shake the world and did not know he was an egoist renounces his ambitions, the next casualty is his idealism and mental integrity.

In point of fact a knowledge of the theory or principles of zazen is not a prerequisite to practice. One who trains under an accomplished teacher will undoubtedly grasp this theory as his practice ripens. Modern students, however, being intellectually more sophisticated than their predecessors in Zen, will not follow instructions unreservedly ; they must know the reason behind them. Hence I feel obliged to deal with theoretical matters. The difficulty with theory, however, is that it is endless. Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist philosophy are no more than intellectual formulations of zazen, and zazen is their practical demonstration.

— YASUTANI ROSHI quoted by Philip Kapleau in
The Three Pillars of Zen, p. 27.

As rivers have their source in some far off fountain, so the human spirit has its source. To find this fountain of spirit is to learn the secret of heaven and earth. In this fountain of mystery spirit is eternally present in endless supply. Any one can avail himself of it for the refreshment and unfolding greatness of his own spirit by the earnest practice of concentration, but to do so he must devote himself to the effort with a stilled mind and sensitive expectancy.

— TAO-TE-KING.

Gary Snyder
REGARDING WAVE

The voice of the Dharma
the voice
now

A shimmering bell
through all.



Every hill, still.
Every tree alive. Every leaf.
All the slopes flow.
old woods, new seedlings,
tall grasses plumes.

Dark hollows; peaks of light.
wind stirs the cool side
Each leaf living.
All the hills.



The Voice
is a wife
to
him still.

THE YAKSHA PRASNA

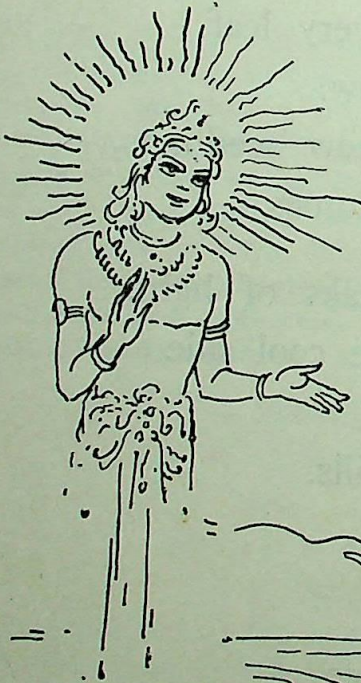
From THE MAHABHARATA (contd. from the last issue)

(Based largely on the annotated edition of K. Balasubramania Iyer published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.)

Yaksha

38. Who is the guest of all beings ?
39. What is the eternal dharma ?
40. What is amrita, Great King ?
41. What is this whole universe ?

This is one of the most difficult set of questions. It is not included in the text of the Mahabharata published by the Bhandarkar Institute, Poona, but only referred to in a note as being given in other editions. Various interpretations have been suggested.



Yudhishtira

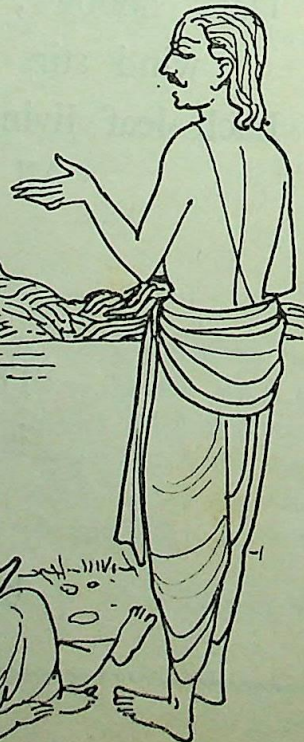
38. Agni (fire) is the guest of all beings.
39. Soma is the eternal dharma.
40. Cow's milk is amrita.
41. Vayu (air or wind) is this whole universe.

Fire was the guest of all in that a sacrificial fire had to be maintained in every household for the performance of sacrifice. Symbolically, fire is the aspiration in the heart of man and therefore the divine guest.

The sacrifice demanded by dharma required oblation of soma into the sacred fire. Symbolically, soma was the intuition or ecstasy offered to the fire of aspiration.

Amrita or nectar stands for ecstasy; the true ecstasy is not inebriation but the sober, substantial wisdom symbolised by milk.

Vayu is referred to in the Upanishads as the outer form of Brahman, since it pervades everything.



Yaksha

42. What is it that travels alone ?
43. What is born again ?
44. What is the antidote to snow or fog ?
45. What is the great receptacle ?

Yudhishtira

42. The sun travels alone.
43. The moon is born again.
44. Fire is the antidote to snow or fog.
45. The earth is the great receptacle.

When the phenomenal world composed of Vayu (in the last of the previous set of questions) disappears, Atma (the sun) remains. Atma (the sun) remains alone, while the mind (the moon) is born again, as the world is projected forth by it. The world thus projected is enveloped in the fog or snow of avidya (ignorance). This is dispersed by the fire of knowledge. The earth stands for nature.

Yaksha

46. What is the sole way to dharma ?
47. What is the sole means to fame ?
48. What alone leads to heaven ?
49. What is the one source of happiness ?

Yudhishtira

46. Integrity is the sole way of dharma.
47. Giving is the sole means to fame.
48. Truth alone leads to heaven.
49. Character is the only source of happiness.

Yaksha

50. Who is the self of a man ?
51. Who is the friend bestowed on him by destiny ?
52. What helps to sustain him ?
53. What is his best resort ?

Yudhishtira

50. A man's son is his self
51. His wife is the friend bestowed on him by destiny.
52. Rain helps to sustain him
53. Giving is his best resort.

A son performed the ritual for a man's posthumous welfare. Symbolically the son stands for the

new life in one who has been 'born again of the Spirit'.

Yaksha

54. What is the best of things praise-worthy ?
55. What is the greatest wealth ?
56. What is the greatest gain ?
57. What is the greatest happiness ?

Yudhishtira

54. Integrity is the best of things praise-worthy.
55. Learning is the greatest wealth
56. Health is the greatest gain.
57. Contentment is the greatest happiness.

Yaksha

58. What is the highest dharma in the world ?
59. What is the dharma which always bears fruit ?
60. Control of what secures one from grief ?
61. With whom does association not come to an end ?

Yudhishtira

58. Universal benevolence is the highest dharma.
59. Vedic dharma always bears fruit.
60. Control of mind secures one from grief.
61. Association with the good never comes to an end.

Neelakantha, the traditional commentator, suggests that the first of these questions implies that the highest dharma is that of the sannyasin, since he is not required to do harm to any.

He holds the second reply to mean pranava, the use of the mantra OM.

Control of the mind, he says, leads to the Atma, which is beyond grief.

By 'association with the good' he understands Sat Sangh, the association with the Enlightened, which even death does not terminate.

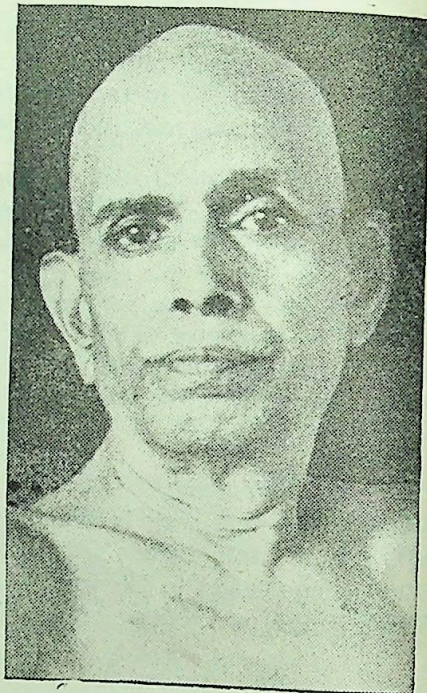
(This dialogue will be continued in our next issue)

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By
R. NARAYANA IYER*

IT was in the year 1928 or may be 1929.

I was employed at Chetput, a township 30 miles from Tiruvannamalai. My only friend and constant companion there was Dr. V. Ramakrishna Iyer, a versatile man of parts, rather religious but not of the orthodox type, very genial and entertaining, one whom I would now deem a 'puru-shottama' (best of men), a friend, philosopher and guide as he subsequently proved to be. I was just the opposite in my make-up, an out and out sceptic with no religion in me, scoffing in my references to Sadhus, Sannyasis and Swamis whom I considered impostors and parasites on society, who exploited the credulous folk for personal ends, and accepted their homage and hero-worship as though they were superior to ordinary men. Dr. Ramakrishna Iyer is the son of the late Lakshmi Ammal, a friend and playmate of Sri Bhagavan in his boyhood days at Tiruchuzhi to which place she also belonged. He was therefore well acquainted with Bhagavan and was an occasional visitor to Sri Ramanasramam. He once asked me to go to Tiruvannamalai with him during the festival of Karthigai Deepam. Although I disliked the crowds and the insanitary condition of the town and the pomp and pageantry of the temple festival had no attraction for me, I agreed, not wishing to hurt his feelings, but requested to be left with my parents who had gone for the festival and were staying in the town, while he went to the Asramam in search of his favourite pursuits. He agreed and took me to the place where they were staying, but on seeing the number of families huddled in a small house I told my friend: "Doctor, I cannot stay here. There is not even breathing space. Your Asramam will have plenty of open air and sunshine and shade of trees. I would rather go there and stay outside while you go in and have your way." He said, 'yes' and took me to the Asramam a mile or so from the town. On the way I repeated my



opinion of the so-called holy men and said to him: "I will not come in or join in any of your 'tomfoolery'. If by chance I meet your 'Swami' I will not prostrate before him. I mean no insult but cannot do what is against my conviction. I don't believe that any man, however great, has a right to accept the homage of others, just because he has learned to memorise and quote scriptures or sacred lore." With this warning to my friend we came to the Asramam. It then comprised just three thatched sheds, a little away from the road, which one could reach by a narrow foot-path amongst thorns and bushes.

We walked in. A man in a white loin-cloth, a towel suspended on his shoulder, a *kamandalu* (water pot) in one hand and a walking stick in another, stopped in his walk in the opposite direction on seeing us. The

* A retired Sub-Registrar and an old devotee, introduced to our readers in our previous issue; January '68, p. 83.

Doctor hastened his steps and I slowly followed. The doctor was greeted very kindly and was asked about the welfare of his mother and brother. It must be the Maharshi, thought I, but I didn't look up as he was a complete stranger to me. Then I heard my friend saying: "This is the Sub-Registrar of Chetput." Out of courtesy I looked at him. What a wonderful face and what a welcoming smile! Bewitching, fascinating and a powerful look too!

In a moment I was at his feet on the gravel ground! I soon regained my self-possession and felt ashamed. "I should not have been so hasty in expressing my views to the Doctor", thought I. Two persons whom I had seen before had impressed me with their powerful personality — Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. "This person surpasses them", said I to myself, "no bogus, looks genuine. Yet I must find out from him about his greatness and how he is entitled to the homage of others and how he accepts it. Has he solved the mystery of life, the universe that we see around? If not I withdraw my homage and go my way." With a pleasing smile he said: "You have a couple of days' leave, is it not so? You can stay in the Asramam. I will be there in a few minutes." I dared not say anything. I was dazed. Soon I recovered and wanted to find out if he had written any book. I got a copy of 'Reality in Forty Verses' in Tamil, just published. I tried to read the first stanza. I could not follow. The words *ulladu* seemed too closely packed and somehow jumbled together to form a stanza. I was flabbergasted. "What", thought I, "can he not say what he has to say in some intelligible language?". Some one nearby said that it had been arranged that the Maharshi himself would explain to us the Forty Verses that night. I prevailed upon my friend to prolong our visit. This time it was his turn to be flabbergasted.

In anxious and eager suspense I waited for the night. The Maharshi sat on a raised *pial* or dais inside a shed containing his mother's *samadhi* (grave). Apparently he used to remain most of the time there. Night came. About half a dozen of us were seated on the ground before him. A solemn stillness pervaded the air. There was absolute silence, except for an occasional chirping of a bird or the hooting of an owl. The Maharshi read the first stanza. The mere reading of the stanza made the meaning as simple as simplicity itself! The word *ulladu* was just used in the sense of Being or Reality, as noun, verb and adjective. Stanza by stanza he read and explained in a voice that was so sweet and melodious and coming as though from 'somewhere'. The climax came. Explaining one verse he said: "God cannot be seen with our eyes or known by our sense perceptions. This is what is meant by saying: *TO SEE GOD IS TO BECOME GOD.*"

One man from the small audience, a stalwart person with a severe expression named Dandapaniswami, interposed: "Is Bhagavan saying this out of personal experience?"

The question asked bluntly with such naiveté was answered with equal candour: "Else would I dare to say so?" Enough. It set me furiously thinking and putting two and two together; what takes so much time to think flashed upon me in a moment. *To see God is to become God.* God cannot be known by our sense faculties. The only way was to become God. If He whom all religions acclaim to be God were to appear before one in flesh and blood, *HERE HE IS.* My body experienced a thrill from somewhere deep down in me. Yet another — again and again, thrill after thrill quivered and shook my frame. I went out to compose myself.

I CAME, HE SAW, HE CONQUERED.

That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients and has never not existed from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christianity.

— ST. AUGUSTINE.



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER TWELVE

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Arjuna said :

Of those devotees who steadily meditate upon you in this manner (i.e. with forms and attributes) and those who meditate upon the Imperishable, the Unmanifest, who are better versed in yoga ?

2

Bhagavan replied :

Those who fixing their minds on Me meditate on Me with steadfastness and who have supreme faith, I deem to be the highest among yogins.

3-4

Those who steadfastly meditate on the Imperishable, the Indescribable, the Unmanifest, Immutable, Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, stable and Immovable, Eternal, — having their senses under control, even-minded under all circumstances, engaged in the welfare of all beings — they reach only Me.

5

More difficult is the task of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest ; the Goal, the Unmanifest, is hard to attain for the embodied beings.

6-7

But those who surrendering all actions to Me, meditate upon Me and worship Me with single-minded devotion, whose hearts are fixed on Me, I speedily rescue from the ocean of death-bounded samsara.

8

Fix your thought on Me alone, center your mind and reason on Me. Then, without doubt, you will abide in Me.

9

If you cannot fix your mind steadily on Me, Oh Dhananjaya, then seek to reach Me by the yoga of constant practice (Abhyasa-yoga).

10

If you are unable to practice that yoga either, then practice performing actions for My sake. This will help you to attain perfection.

11

If you are unable to do even this, then taking refuge in Me, self-controlled, abandon the fruit of all actions.

(performed entirely without selfish motives as service to God)

12

Better indeed is knowledge than practice ; meditation better than knowledge ; the abandonment of the fruit of action better than meditation. Peace results from this abandonment.

13

He who hates no single being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who has no attachments and is free of egoism, equal in pain and pleasure and forbearing,

14

who is ever content and balanced in mind, self-controlled and firm in his conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on Me, he My devotee, is dear to Me.

15

He by whom the world is not afflicted and who is not afflicted by the world, who is free from pleasure, anger, fear and anxiety — he is dear to Me.

16

He who has no wants, who is pure, prompt, unconcerned, free from anxiety, renouncing all undertakings, he My devotee, is dear to Me.

17

He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, full of devotion, he is dear to Me.

18-19

He who is the same to foe and friend and also in honour and dishonour ; the same in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain ; free from attachment ; to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, contented with whatever comes to him, homeless, steady-minded and full of devotion — that man is dear to Me.

20

They who follow this immortal dharma described here, endued with faith and devotion and to whom I am Supreme (regarding Me as their supreme Goal), are exceedingly dear to Me.

This is the twelfth chapter called the YOGA OF DEVOTION.

The body is the cross. Jesus, the son of man, is the ego or 'I-am-the-body' -idea. When the son of man is crucified on the cross, the ego perishes, and what survives is the Absolute Being. It is the resurrection of the Glorious Self, of the Christ — the Son of God.

— SRI MAHARSHI.

THE UPANISHAD* RAMANA CHATVARIMSAT

OR
FORTY VERSES IN PRAISE OF RAMANA

by
KAVYAKANTHA GANAPATI MUNI

1. The world has now found a protector in Ramana, the ocean of compassion who has made the hill of Arunachala his abode, the true story of whose life destroys ignorance ; who knows the truth uttered by him (Vishnu) who rides the bird (Garuda) ; who keeps within himself the secret of the silence of (Dakshinamurti or Siva) the rider of the bull ;

2. Who is the Guru of the assembly of learned scholars including the king of the Ganas¹ ; who is an ocean of noble qualities ; whose great effulgence is hidden by the sheath of the body, like the blazing sun by dense clouds ;

3. Who is perfect in the control of the restless senses ; who is expert at recognizing the merits of others ; who abides in the natural samadhi of silence ; who has firmly subdued the fearful lusts ;

4. Who eats only when necessary ; who performs severe austerities on the slopes of the hill ; whose heart is not touched by the arrows (of the god of love) who bears the fish on his banner ; who has cultivated the path of knowing the Self ;

5. Who has crossed the fearful ocean of sam-sara ; who uses his lotus hands to serve him as a (begging) bowl² ; who, by his bright and exceedingly refreshing gaze, removes the fear of those who take refuge at his lotus feet ;

6. Who is like a treasure to the true devotees who bow down before him ; whose presence disperses their great miseries like dust ; who maintains the rules (dharma) of ascetics ; who dispels ignorance all round ;

* Continued from our last issue. For an explanatory introduction see our Jan. '68 issue, p. 71.

7. Who is the possessor of virtues enough to be described by the King of the Serpents (Adishesha) ³; who speaks words which are sweet, true and beneficent; who is neither pleased by honour nor distressed by insults;

8. Who is the king of ascetics; who has destroyed the ego with his steady, bright and keen intellect; who is immersed in the flood of eternal bliss; who has exterminated the inner hordes of enemies (like greed, anger, etc.);

9. Who has, through his own abilities, achieved the Supreme Divine state not easily attained; who is free from the sense of 'mine'; who has the welfare of the good at heart; who is cherished in the heart of the Lord of the Ganas (Ganapati);

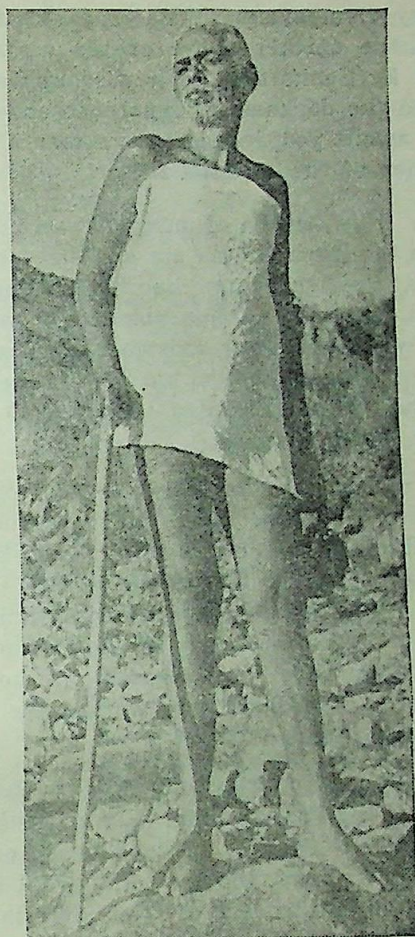
10. Who abandoned even the lap of the daughter of the mountain (Parvati) in order to remove the ignorance enveloping mankind and who is the piercer of the hill ⁴ (named Krowncha) in human form.

11. May the Supreme Guru, the ascetic wearing only a loin-cloth, the God who rides the peacock (Kartikeya), come on earth as a man, alone rule the world.

12. Salutations to thee, O Guru who has transcended all qualities, life-long celibate who hast assumed, through maya, the form of a man, slayer of Taraka.⁵

13. Here is no peacock to carry you, no celestial river (the Ganges) for bathing, no nectar of mother's milk from the breasts of Parvati, no lords of Pramathas ⁶ with veenas to sing to you. Why, then, O piercer of the Krowncha Hill, have you taken up your abode on the red hill (of Arunagiri)?

14. O Enemy of Taraka, You have only one face, you do not have a place on Uma's (Parvati's) lap, you do not carry the weapon known as Sakti in your hand, you are in human form, there are no celestial armies with flags on either side of you. This disguise is enough to cloud the eyes of the simple, but how can you escape the vigilance of your own brother (Ganapati)?



15. Some worship your lotus feet considering you the foremost among the yogis, some as a great Sage (jnani), others as an ascetic, and others as their Guru: only two or three recognize him who is known as Ramana as the divine Guha ⁷ sitting on the lap of Uma, born on earth for the welfare of mankind.

16. You expounded the significance of Om (to Brahma) the Lord of Sarasvati (Goddess of learning). Your mouth opened a little to instruct even your father (Siva). You have now, by virtue of your wisdom, come out as the Guru of your elder brother (Ganapati). Though young, O Subrahmanya, you have, by your merits, become greater than all.

17. The throne reserved for the foremost among the Acharyas which was first ascend-

ed by Dvaipayana (Veda Vyasa) who had seen the further shore of the Vedas and later by Sankara of high wisdom who dispelled the darkness of ignorance and doubt, now awaits you, incarnate as a man, O Commander of the celestial host.

18. Now, when dharma is at an end, when the three worlds are distressed by evil deeds, when scholars, having lost sight of Truth, learnedly discuss polemics to no end, and when the very existence of God, the Father, is doubted, who but you, in the guise of man, is the refuge of the good, O Lord, Rider of the Peacock?

19. Dispassion may be valuable for you, but how can you refuse to show mercy? Activity may be a defect for you, but is meditation on the feet of the Father (God) a defect? Desires may be contemptible to you, but is the protection of those who submit contemptible? O Skanda in the disguise of a mortal, are you waiting for some particular occasion?

20. Hence sophistry! O Bull of Dharma, you need no longer limp. Away with bewilderment! May the good flourish everywhere. Our Lord, the son of Bhavani (Parvati), the destroyer of the delusion of Soora's⁸ inner eye has now appeared on earth with his brother (Ganapati).

21. O Men, revere this brother of Lambodara⁹ in the form of a Guru who, by his power, pervades this body and the entire world and who, though one, manifests as the Self of the multifarious moving beings, having already reached his primary secret Source and destroyed the separateness of the ego.

22. Salutations to Sri Ramana, the Universal Guru, the destroyer of misery, who has reached the eternal state full of light and free from darkness without and within, who removes the ignorance of those who submit to him and who, though seeing the world, exists beyond the world.

23. O Ramana! May your gracious glance be turned just once on me, that I may be blessed.

24. O Ramana! You are the Guru of men. Great is your heart which knows no otherness.

25. Through your teaching, the world, ego and God all appear to me as the one undifferentiated being beyond all doubt.

26. Through your teaching the Existence, which is different from the ego, flows in the form of consciousness not separate from me.

27. We shall realize in our heart the pure (Self) which is subtler than the ego, if we have your grace.

28. O King of Sages! Compassion is not merely a quality of yours but is natural to the effulgent heart which you are.

29. O Sinless one! Your form blazes with pure light. Infinite is your effulgent look.

30. O Lord, your mind has been swallowed by your heart and you shine with eternal bliss.

¹ In this as well as in a number of the subsequent stanzas the author looks upon himself as an incarnation (avatar) of Ganapati, the elder son of Siva and Parvati, and the Maharshi as an avatar of Ganapati's younger brother Skanda whose two other names are Kartikeya and Subrahmanya. Ganas are celestial beings who wait upon Ganapati, their lord and master.

² This refers to a period in the life of Bhagavan when he did indeed beg for food. He used no begging bowl but only accepted as much as he could take in his hands. He never asked but only stood silently in front of a house and accepted what was given. If he was not given anything he just walked on. He never went twice to the same house.

³ Adishesha, the king of the serpents, upon whose coils Vishnu reposes in the milky ocean, has a thousand heads and therefore a thousand tongues. The idea is that so many tongues are required to describe the Maharshi's qualities.

⁴ This refers to Skanda.

⁵ This also refers to Skanda.

⁶ These are celestial beings who wait upon Siva. The veena is a stringed musical instrument.

⁷ This refers to Skanda.

⁸ The name of a demon killed by Skanda.

⁹ A name of Ganapati.

31. O Chief of those who are self-controlled, you have been made the cook of the Lord of the universe.

32. For you slaughter the egos of these human cattle and cook them as food for the Supreme Siva.

33. I bow down before Bhagavan Ramana who destroys the ignorance in the hearts of human beings not only by his words but also by his compassionate look.

34. Sinking again and again in the ocean of samsara we now clutch at the island of your lotus feet. O Bhagavan Ramana! You are the abode of all auspiciousness. O Compassionate one, cast your gracious glance upon us, your supplicants.

35. What will be the fate of the babe if the mother does not suckle it? If the cowherd becomes angry how will the cows be protected? If you who are the Acharya of those who seek refuge at your feet do not destroy their doubts how can they who are overcome by countless delusions cross the ocean of samsara?

36. There is perfect peace in your benevolent, gracious smile, great power in the unequalled radiant glance of your clear, steady eyes; you abide always in the lotus of the heart; outwardly you shine like a calm lake; O Bhagavan Ramana, what parallel is there in all the world to your silence?

37. This power in your eyes which dispels the ignorance of your devotees is divine. This beauty in your face like that of the spouse (Lakshmi) of the Lotus-Eyed (Vishnu) is divine. These words which are transcendental and secret are divine. Great Ramana, Acharya of the world, how can a mere mortal praise you?

38. O Ramana, though I am now far away from your feet, a great power acts upon me. Like the blazing light of the sun your power, supreme in all the world, works from a distance, making my mind free from grief.

39. Your blessedness, O Red Hill (Arunachala), derived from the residence of many sages, is now unrivalled, since Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi chose you from many places.

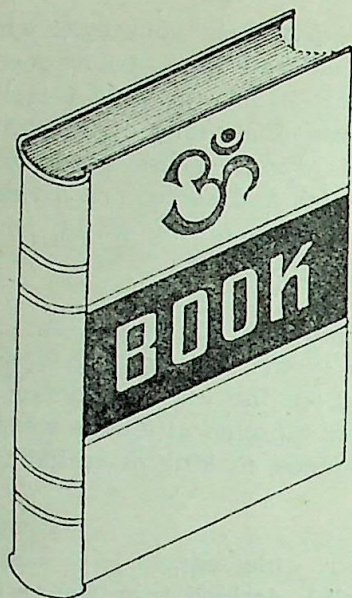
40. This Ramana Maharshi is an ideal held out for men because of his depth of peace, his transcendent power, his wonderful dispassion, his immense mercy, his wisdom which dispels illusion and his gracious conduct.

Ganapati, the son of Narasimha, of the lineage of Vasishtha, has thus in these forty verses worshipped briefly the Rishi Ramana, an incarnation of Skanda.

(To be continued in our next issue).

There are bhikkhus in this company who are Arahants: having extinguished the corruptions, completed the ascetic life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained their goal, utterly destroyed the fetters of existence, and who are delivered by right insight.

— BUDDHA — Kandaraka Sutta et alia.



REVIEWS

✓ **"FOUR LAMAS OF DOLPO":** By D. L. Snellgrove. Autobiographies of four Tibetan Lamas (15th—18th centuries); Vol. I. Introduction and Translations. X + 302 pages, 46 plates; Price 84s. Publishers: Bruno Cassirer, Oxford 1967.

Among the younger generation of Tibetologists, Dr. Snellgrove (who is now Reader in Tibetan at the London School of Oriental and African Studies, and Director of the Institute of Tibetan Studies) has the unique distinction of having worked and studied among Tibetans in one of the last untouched enclaves of medieval Tibetan life in the borderland of Nepal and Western Tibet. He lived like a simple Tibetan under very primitive conditions in a far-away, practically unexplored highland-valley, which originally formed part of the Tibetan kingdom of Purang (*sPu-hrangs*). About his travels in this region and other little known parts of northern Nepal, Snellgrove has published already two highly informative books under the titles "Buddhist Himalaya" (1957) and "Himalayan Pilgrimage" (1961), in which he combines a very readable travelogue with a detailed and scholarly description of the religious life and tradition of the people.

The present volume, which is the outcome of his last journey of exploration, is a good example of what Tibetology should be—and could have been from its beginning, if most of the earlier pioneers in this field had had the humility of putting aside their own preconceived ideas and feelings of intellectual superiority. No amount of philological knowledge is sufficient for a real understanding of Tibetan mentality and religious

experience. It requires, in addition to the linguistic knowledge, the capacity to enter into the spirit of Tibetan culture and religion, and this is only possible by living with the people on a basis of equality and mutual respect, sharing their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, and—what is more—sharing their religious life. This does not mean that a scholar has to be or to become a Buddhist, but at least, that he should be capable of appreciating the fundamental values of religious tradition—however alien it may appear in its forms—and recognize it as a genuine expression of spiritual experience and the desire for perfection and enlightenment.

In these biographies of Four Lamas of Dolpo we get a life-like picture of four saintly religious teachers, which is both touchingly human and deeply significant, as it reveals the struggle between the highest ideals and the adversities of ordinary human existence under often extremely difficult circumstances. The Lamas concerned represent four very different characters: Sonam Loto (*bSod-nams blo-gros*: "Merit Intellect"), who lived from 1456-1521, was inclined towards a hermit-life. Chö-kyab Palzang (*Chos-skyabs dpal-bzang*: "Religious Protector Glorious and Good"), who lived from 1476-1565 and was the former's pupil, was a teacher and organizer. Palden Loto (*dPal-ldan blo-gros*: "Glorious Intellect") was more of a mystic: a dreamer and exorcist. He lived from 1467-1536. The fourth Lama, Sonam Wang-chug (*bSod-nams dbang-phyug*: "Lord of Merit"), 1660-1731, was a scholar and traveller.

Except for their final sections, describing the death and the funeral rites, these biographies

were compiled during the lifetime of the Lamas concerned, according to their own words as well as to the observations of their contemporaries. They are, therefore, to a great extent autobiographical and historically as well as spiritually highly significant. Even where certain magical powers and miraculous experiences are described, we cannot simply dismiss them as products of mere imagination or attributions of credulous followers, and the translator himself, after careful consideration of all evidence (and with his own experience among religious people of this type), does not think that such an assumption is justified, and says: "There certainly is a marked difference between these lamas' opinions of themselves and their disciples reinterpretation of their lives, but it seems that the possession of magical powers is one of the few attributes on which all are agreed." (p. 12) In fact, the Lamas themselves speak very modestly about their spiritual attainments and do not claim supernatural powers or knowledge, but emphasize that salvation cannot be attained without great exertion, as their own struggles for perfection have shown. "Religious Protector" was once asked by one of his faithful attendants, who was on the point of death, to promise that they would always be born together in future lives. He replied: "Since there was some connection from our former lives, we have met in this one. So by the combination of these circumstances it would seem certain that we shall meet in other lives. Apart from this I am not a sage who can promise such things, but it would be all right to say a prayer." (p. 169)

As already demonstrated in the above-mentioned four names of the Lamas with which the biographies of this book are concerned, Tibetan names are generally composed of various religious concepts or virtues, so that it is possible to render them in translation. While most writers on Tibetan subjects have rendered such names, as well as the better known technical terms either phonetically or according to their original spelling, or both side by side, Snellgrove has translated most of the names and terms into English, in order to make it easier for his readers to remember them. In general he has succeeded well in this, though some of the names which sound quite easy in Tibetan, like 'Dorje Gyaltsen' or 'Chökyab Palzang' become rather cumbersome in English, when rendered as "Powerbolt Victorious Banner" and "Religious Protector Glorious and Good". The translation of 'Dorje' as "Powerbolt" (though better than "Thunderbolt", as used by some writers) nel-

ther corresponds to the meaning of the Tibetan word "*rdo-rje*"—which means the Lord of Stones", i.e. the diamond,—nor to the meaning of *vajra* in Buddhist Sanskrit, as explained in the *Vajracchedika-Prajna-Paramita-Sutra*, in which likewise the nature of the *vajra* is described as that of a diamond. The *Vajrayana* has, therefore, rightly been called the "Diamond Vehicle"—and not the "Thunderbolt" or "Powerbolt Vehicle". As a visible symbol the *vajra* or 'Dorje' takes the shape of a scepter, so that it would be correct to call it "Diamond Scepter", in which the symbols of power and of indestructibility, as well as of supreme value are united. Unless a translation brings about the right associations (mentally as well as emotionally), it is better to leave such a term untranslated.

This applies in an even greater measure to the interpretation of the well-known Dhyani-Bodhisattva *Avalokitesvara* (Tib.: *sPyan-ras-gzŋs*, pron. "Chenresie"), rendered as "the would-be buddha Glancing Eye"! This is not only ugly, but outright misleading, because *Avalokitesvara* is not a "Buddha in the making", an incomplete Buddha or one who is on his way to Buddhahood, but on the contrary, the active emanation of the highest state of Buddhahood, symbolized in *Amitabha*, the Buddha of Infinite Light.

Though the term Bodhisattva can also be used in the sense of one in whom the consciousness of enlightenment (*bodhi-citta*) has become the driving force of his life, as in Prince Siddhartha, before he attained enlightenment (or even after his first vow in the presence of Buddha Dipankara),—yet, the very expression "would-be buddha" has such a derogative undertone (like a "would-be gentleman") that it can never be an adequate substitute for the very positive term 'bodhisattva' or its Tibetan equivalent '*byang-chub-sems-dpah*', in which the accent is not on any kind of incompleteness of attainments, but on the overwhelmingly active quality of Enlightenment.

Another word which is likely to cause misunderstanding in the present translation, is one of the key-concepts of Buddhism, namely the root of all suffering: *avidya* (Tib.: *ma-rig*) "ignorance", or *moha* (Tib.: *gTi-mug*) "delusion", "mental darkness", which Snellgrove renders with "stupidity", *gTi-mug*, according to Tibetan definition, is the characteristic of the animal realm. Animals may lack the faculty of reasoning, but one certainly cannot call them "stupid"! Already Ananda Coomaraswami criticised the superficial way in which these important con-

cepts of Buddhist as well as Hindu philosophy were interpreted: "In making ignorance the root of all evil", he said, in his well-known work "Hinduism and Buddhism", "we must guard ourselves from supposing that an ignorance of any particular thing is meant, and especially against a confusion of the traditional 'ignorance' with what we mean by 'illiteracy'; so far from this, our empirical knowledge of facts is an essential part of the very ignorance that makes desire possible." (p. 62).

The delusion of which the Buddha speaks is not stupidity (in fact, the cleverest are the most likely to fall into the traps of delusion) but the ignorance of ultimate Reality, which is revealed in the experience of Enlightenment.

However, these are minor blemishes in a work which is not primarily concerned with philosophical and metaphysical ideas but with the actual life of people who tried to realize the highest aspirations of their religion. These biographies are not only near to life, but have an unmistakable ring of truth, which makes them valuable—far beyond their literary importance—as witnesses of spiritual attainments. These are all the more remarkable, as the Lamas concerned were neither well-known personalities or abbots of important monasteries, nor outstanding scholars but, as we might say, simple hermits and village-priests, who faithfully looked after the welfare of their flocks, while pursuing at the same time their higher aims in lonely retreats and long periods of meditation. That in so remote a place like Dolpo, under the most primitive conditions and among simple villagers, such heights of spiritual life could be attained, shows that real culture is independent of what we regard the blessings of civilisation. At the same time it may give us an idea of what the average religious life even in the outlying regions of Tibet used to be. In translating these biographies, Snellgrove has created a masterpiece that will be worthy to stand by the side of such classics as Milarepa's life-story. For this he deserves the gratitude of all lovers of Tibet and its sacred tradition.

The book is illustrated with excellent photographs, taken by the author during his stay in Dolpo. Fourteen of these plates are reproductions of beautiful temple-banners (*thang-ka*), painted by the Lama of the "Residence of Great Happiness" (*bDe-chen bLa-brang*) in Dolpo, in whose hermitage the author was staying and working. That such works of art could be produced upto the present day, shows that this tradition is still alive. It would have been good if a detailed description of the iconographical details of these

Thangkas would have been added. But perhaps this will be included in the second volume, which is to contain the original Tibetan texts, Commentary and Glossary.

LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT AND WHAT AM I?

By Richard B. Gregg (Indian Edition, Navajivan, Ahmedabad 14, pp. 192, Rs. 5).

Mr. Gregg shows the world envisaged by the nuclear scientist to be so different from that reported by our senses that the word 'maya' might very well be used for the latter, although he does not in fact use it. He then turns from the observed to the observer in search of some individual entity ('soul' or 'self') in each human being, and finds no evidence for any. In fact what seems to him the most plausible in the Buddhist doctrine of anatta is a state of permanent flux. It is not being or intelligence that he repudiates but only their physical vehicles and individual limitations.

Mr. Gregg is concerned also with corporate life (that is with 'culture' or 'civilization'). He finds this to be largely based in pre-logical assumptions, individual or corporate, which are neither proved nor disproved but taken for granted as a basis for life. He holds that the main cause of the malaise of the modern world is that its basic assumptions can be true or false and that it is false assumptions which have brought the modern world to its present plight. Even, so this is a most stimulating book and penetrates deeply into the problems of life and reality.

THINKING WITH THE YAJURVEDA: By Gandabhai G. Desai (Asia Publishing House Bombay-1, Pp. 178, Rs. 20).

It is an old tradition that the Vedas embody a Knowledge which lends itself to a number of interpretations, ritualistic, theological, spiritual, astronomical and so on. The author of the present exposition brings out the spiritual content of the Yajur Veda with special emphasis on its bearings on the social and collective development of humanity. He has been fortunate in having a 'new dimension' added to his vision as a result of the Grace and Teaching of Bhagavan Maharshi and his writing is consequently lit with the glow of Agni, the premier Deity of the Veda.

In the first few chapters, Sri Desai gives a synoptic view of the role assigned to Agni (in the Veda) in the building up and manifestation of the Cosmos. He describes how Agni reveals himself in different forms on different planes of

existence and presides over the evolutionary progress of the Universe. He cites the conclusions of the leaders of modern Science in vindication of the insight of the ancient Seers regarding the Oneness of Creation at all basic levels.

The individual awakes to the truth of his own existence as a result of the pressure of Agni which translates itself as an unceasing aspiration for the Divine. But the spiritual development envisaged by the Yajur Veda, points out the author, is not individualistic alone; at every step, the seeker relates himself to the society, to the larger world around and by a willed process of self-consecration and self-giving, termed Yajna in its symbolic figure, he contributes to the higher evolution of the race. Chapters on the Purusha and Sarva Medha Yajnas are noteworthy contributions.

Progress is made through reconciliation of opposites and Sri Desai focusses our attention on the harmonisation in the Veda of the claims of kshatra (power) and brahma (knowledge).

✓ **THE MESSAGE OF THE RISHIS:** By Anjilvel V. Mathew (Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore-6. Pp. 95. Price: Rs. 3.50.)

The author of this commendable study approaches the Upanishads as an enlightened Christian and finds much in them that is paralleled by the utterances of the ancient Hebrew Prophets. She examines the major texts with a view to determine what the Seers experienced of the Reality and how much of it they expressed. God as the Absolute, God as Person, God and Nature, Ethics in the Upanishads, Grace—these are some of the topics discussed within the framework provided by the New Testament. The author is evidently handicapped by the tenets of her religion regarding Grace, Sin, etc., and is unable to appreciate the full significance of the Doctrine of Grace in the Upanishads.

There is a remark that the Upanishads nowhere refer to God as love. The texts speak of Brahman, again and again, as *Ananda*, Bliss; and Love is a term of that Bliss.

A sincere and readable book.

M. P. PANDIT.

YOU SHALL BE AS GODS, a radical interpretation of the Old Testament and its tradition: By Erich Fromm (Jonathan Cape. Pp. 240. Price: 25s.)

Although writing about Judaeism, Erich Fromm refuses to call himself a theist. One suspects,

however, that the 'God' he rejects is rather the 'concept of God' which he refers to elsewhere as 'idolatry'. It is very interesting to see how he finds the Hindu and Buddhist 'negative theology' paralleled, for instance in Maimonides, in the Judaeic understanding which will postulate only negative attributes of God, since every affirmation is a limitation.

As one would expect in a Judaeic work, much attention is paid to the mystique of history and the Jewish concept of the Messiah.

The book is well spiced with anecdotes from the rabbis and hazedim which rival those from Zen in their trenchancy. It is altogether the work of a vigorous mind.

H. S. G.

✓ **SRI LALITA TRISATI BHASHYA** of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada: English Translation by Dr. Chaganti Suryanarayana Murthy. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 148. Price: Rs. 5.)

Sri Lalita-trisati-stotra forms part of "Sri Lalitopakhyana" of the Brahmanda-purana. The story connected with its composition is as follows: The sage Agastya who was an adept in the worship of Sri Lalita, the Divine Mother, felt distressed because he had not gained Her grace in spite of great austerity and acts of devotion. He clung to the feet of his Guru. Hayagriva, imploring him to intercede with the Mother on his behalf. Three years passed, and Agastya did not leave off holding on to his Guru's feet. Sri Lalita, greatly pleased with the ardour of the disciple, appeared along with Her consort Sri Kamesvara before Hayagriva, and commanded him to impart to Agastya the most sacred *Trisati-stotra* composed by Herself and Her Lord. Hayagriva was profoundly moved by this special act of the Mother's grace, and obeyed Her Command. Thus it was that Agastya received the *stotra* which contains three hundred Names of the Mother. The Names have a unique sanctity because their initial letters, in groups of twenty, are the letters of the fifteen-lettered *Mantra* (*panchadasi-mantra*) of the Devi.

Sri Sankaracharya has written a lucid commentary on the Trisati. The main purport of this commentary is to show that the cult of the Devi is in perfect consonance with Advaita. The present translator of the commentary, Dr. Chaganti Suryanarayana Murthy, shows that there is not the slightest support in the commentary for the Vama or Kaula-achara (left-handed practices). A valuable addition to the Introduction is a free translation of the *Sri-Vidya-dipika* of Agastya which expounds the significance of the

fifteen-lettered *Mantra* in its three parts, viz. *vagbhava-kuta*, *kamaraja-kuta*, and *sakti-kuta*.

The translation of Sankara's commentary is only by those who are interested in Sri-Vidya but also by students of Advaita. It is to be hoped that when this book is reprinted, the mistakes in printing, which are far too many, will be avoided.

PROF. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

THE PRACTICAL APPROACH TO DIVINITY:

By Chandra Swami. (Available from Sri D. R. Monga, Manager, United Commercial Bank Ltd., Chandni Chowk, Delhi.)

Amid the welter of claims made nowadays this little book stands out with delightful clarity. The author speaks with equal authority on theory and practice and shows both understanding and common sense, condemning alike those who make the path a mere topic for discussion and those who drive themselves unwisely and too hard. He obviously has a great deal of experience and is able to differentiate between what is to be shunned and what sought after.

We are told that Chandra Swami gave up his studies and took sannyas at the age of 21, when a student of M.Sc. in 1952. He is now staying at Hardwar at the foot of the Himalayas where he observes complete silence for six months out of every year.

A MODERN PRELUDE: By Hugh l'Anson Fausset. *This book was published by Jonathan Cape, London, as far back as 1933, but the author passed away recently and our occasional contributor, G. F. Allen, has sent us the following appreciation of it.—(Editor)*

It is now several years since the Russian philosopher Nicholai Berdyaev made his famous but unheeded observation: In order to understand Christianity one must first study Hinduism. Of recent years an increasing number of Westerners, including a few Christian missionaries, have discovered the truth of Berdyaev's statement. But none can have described it in more pertinent and detailed terms than has Hugh l'Anson Fausset in Part II of his autobiography.

Part I, 'The Outer Journey', describes his childhood and youth in England; it is noteworthy only for the account of his father's pathologically raw intolerance. His father was a Church of England clergyman; his mother (who dies at his birth) a Quaker. Part II, 'The Inner Journey', will prove of greater interest to the readers of *The Mountain Path*, for in it is contained an account of the reasons for the author's choice of Advaita Vedanta which no Westerner treading

the mountain path towards self-realization should miss reading.

Fausset studied St. Paul and the early Christian Fathers, as well as Augustine, Aquinas, John of Ruysbroek, Eckhart, Hooker Newman, Rashdall, Inge, and Von Hugel before feeling himself conscientiously free to dismiss the organized Christian Church as being but the empty shell of the original teaching of the Founder. His studies extended to the textual irrelevancies of the New Testament, the results of which research are devastatingly revealing. He was then impelled to interpret the mystical origins of the Christian sacraments themselves. 'But I did not need', he wrote (p. 264), 'any esoteric knowledge to recognize in the mystery of the Incarnation the descent of the divine spirit into man; in that of Gethsemane and Calvary the crucifixion of the spiritual being on the cross of matter and the death pangs of the personal self; in the 'Resurrection' the rebirth into creative life; and in the 'Ascension' the ascent of the true self to a full realization of its divine nature.'

✓ **THE STORY OF MELTING, SACHAL SARMAT'S PERSIAN MASNAVI GUDAZ-NAMA:** By Tirathdas Hotchand. (Pradeep Publications, Hirabad, Bhurgri Road, Hyderabad, West Pakistan. Pp. 43. Price: Re. 1.)

Until the separation of India and Pakistan Sindh was a province of poets, saints and mystics where Sufi and Vedantist lived together in blissful amity. Now the old traditions are vanishing and being replaced by politics.

Sachal Sarmast was one of the great Sufi poets of Sindh. He lived in the 18th and early 19th Century. The Masnavi Gudaz-nama is a Persian poem about the melting of man's seeming-separate self through the power of Divine Love. It is a proclamation of the ultimate Oneness and overrides the barriers between the religions. Even though the translation is not felicitous, we can be grateful for having something salvaged from the former wealth of Sindhi poetry.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

THE DIARY OF A MYSTIC: By Edward Thornton. (George Allen & Unwin. Pp. 177. Price: 20s.)

This book represents the author's contribution towards the fulfilment of the aims and aspirations of the Institute of Psychic and Spiritual Research in New Delhi. The autobiographical notes reveal the background which leads the author who is also a successful business man to his mystical experience and the unfoldment of his inner

journey in search of Truth. As the author so aptly expresses it, "Many of us feel that there is a plan or purpose underlying existence. As we grow old it becomes clearer that what appeared to be quite insignificant events were responsible for directing our lives towards a fulfilment beyond death." Life becomes the Guru even for those who do not seek, giving them the necessary knocks and experiences to open their eyes to the true purpose of it, or to make them seek certainty in an uncertain world of ever changing values and such transient and elusive happiness. Happiness, as Sri Ramana Maharshi said, is our birthright, so it is being sought always, not always in the right way. A thief and drunkard are also pursuing happiness.

This spiritual autobiography will be of special interest to students of Jung, who was the teacher of the author for several years, and to those interested in psychology and mysticism. The author seems to be greatly influenced by him. Their phraseology is not always quite consistent with true mysticism. How can a "journey into the unconscious" lead to awareness or integration? In the author's opinion the greatest contribution to modern medicine is the discovery by Jung that in many cases men fall ill because they have lost contact with their spiritual roots. Their cure depended on re-establishing that contact and having access to the autochthonous religious function of their psyche.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

THE HYMNS OF ATHARVANA ZARATHUSTRA: By Jatindra Mohan Chatterji. (The Parsi Zoroastrian Association, 1, Saklat Place, Calcutta-13. Pp. 389 plus 159 pages of Introduction. Price: Rs. 25.)

This is indeed a *magnum opus* of Shri J. M. Chatterji. It is obviously the product of a lifetime of devoted study of the Gathas and the religion of Zarathustra. It carries an appreciative message by Dr. Radhakrishnan.

As the publisher's note says, scholars may disagree with a particular view taken by Shri Chatterji but this does not, in any way, detract from the value of the publication. Shri Chatterji is to be congratulated for this monumental labour of love and the time and care and energy that he has bestowed on his work.

The Avesta texts with their prose-order and literal translation and word-notes are given in detail. All in all, this is not a handy book for the layman, but a reference work for libraries and the scholars.

Shri Chatterji's book serves a dire need, but due to its size and price, it limits its scope to scholars, and school, college and university libraries and most certainly is a *must* for research libraries.

VINODINI M. GHARAT.

ON HAVING NO HEAD: A CONTRIBUTION TO ZEN IN THE WEST: By D. E. Harding. (The Buddhist Society, 58 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.-1. Pp. 51. Price: 6sh.)

The best thing in this book is the description of a remarkable personal experience by the author, a pre-glimpse of realization: "There arose no question, no reference beyond the experience itself, but only peace and a quiet joy and the sensation of having dropped an intolerable burden. It felt like a sudden waking from the sleep of ordinary life, an end to dreaming. It was self-luminous Reality . . ." It is very hard to describe a glimpse of a state from which "words turn away baffled". Whatever one may say, however near, fails to describe the Undescribable. That is why the Scriptures take recourse to "Neti, Neti" (not this, not this).

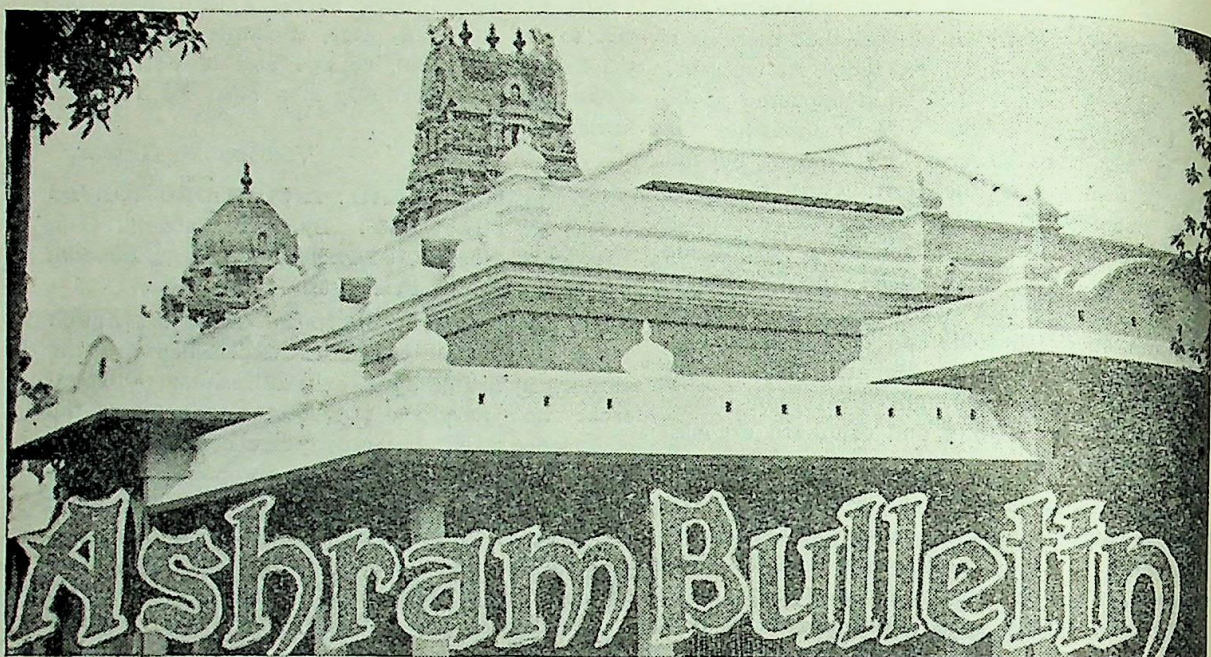
The author succeeds remarkably well to make this experience alive as far as possible to the readers so that they may also try to get it. If by the "head" he means mind, well and good. This reviewer is wondering why he leaves the rest of the body. Is it not as much or as little a part of the illusion or superimposition as the rest? This glimpse may be experienced by some as only HEAD or MIND or pure Awareness or I-am-ness without any otherness whatsoever. ". . . nay himself was not present to himself. Even of beauty he is no longer aware, for now he has travelled beyond the beautiful . . ." (Plotinus).

The motive for writing this book is the author's urge to communicate and to help others get out of the morass of their own making. An excellent motive indeed and a very good ending after proving that our case is absolutely hopeless: "However this need cause no alarm. It is all peripheral, elsewhere. Here the Sovereign of the Centre reigns. Here is one that exists Alone, and alone exists, though infinitely beyond aloneness and existence. Who could attain to This except it Self and what need to attain?"

LUCIA OSBORNE.

A NEW PUBLICATION

SRI RAMANA VAZHI (The Path of Ramana), in Tamil: By Sadhu Om, Copies available at Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India, Price: Rs. 2.50.



SRI RAMANA SAT SANGH

DEVOTEES of Bhagavan know that there has always been complete freedom for them to follow their own methods of sadhana inside the Ashram for which they get powerful support from Bhagavan. Everyone is taken up at his own level of development. There is no compulsion of any kind to partake in religious or spiritual activities. The inmates have rarely been in the habit of gathering for meditation or spiritual discussion at prescribed hours or on fixed days. This complete absence of regimentation has been appreciated by inmates and visitors alike and has been acclaimed as the unique and refreshing feature of the Ashram. Latterly, however, a few of the devotees began to feel that it would be desirable to assemble once in a week in some place inside the Ashram and conduct discussions or discourses on spiritual subjects, especially Bhagavan's teachings. Accordingly from the middle of January Sat Sanghs (gatherings of devotees) are being held for about an hour on all Sunday evenings in the New Hall. The Sangh starts with the recitation of some Tamil verses from Bhagavan's works and the exposition of a verse or two. This is followed by a short talk on spiritual subjects, especially Bhagavan's teachings, by one of the

devotees present. The Sangh comes to an end with silent meditation.

Prof. R. K. Viswanathan, who is now settled, after his retirement, in Ramana Nagar, and on whose persuasion the Sat Sangh was formed, is made the Secretary of it. He is very earnest and has already proved to be really capable of conducting these meetings successfully.

Apart from the weekly Sat Sanghs there were also some special Sanghs during the last quarter. These were addressed by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director for Advanced Studies in Philosophy, Madras, Prof. M. M. Verma, retired Professor of the Rajasthan University, Prof. N. R. Krishnamurthi Aiyar, and Major Abdul Gaffur.

GOVERNOR'S VISIT

Sardar Ujjal Singh, the Governor of Madras, paid a visit to the Ashram at the end of December last. He was accompanied by the Collector of the District, Mr. B. K. Belliappa. They were shown round the Ashram by the President and the Trustees. The Governor showed considerable interest in everything that he saw. Priests chant-



Sardar Ujjal Singh, the Governor of Madras, is seen absorbed inside the 'Nirvana' room. Next to him are: Sri K. Padmanabhan, Trustee, Sri Swami Sathyananda and the Ashram President.

ed Vedas before him and offered garlands of flowers and sacred *prasadam* at the end. Before leaving the Ashram the Governor made a handsome donation to the Ashram.

SRI RAMANA JAYANTHI IN BOMBAY

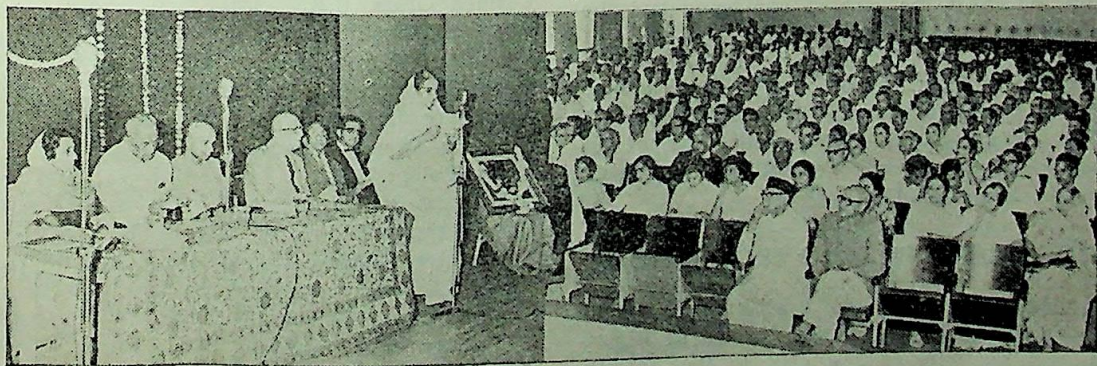
The 88th Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at the Birla Kreedha Kendra, Chowpaty, Bombay, on 1st January 1968. Sri S. K. Patil, a former minister of the Government of India, presided over the function. The chief guest of the evening was Kum. Savitaben Nanji Kalidas Mehta, Acharya of the Shree Aryakanya Gurukul, Porbander. Swami Poornananda Tirtha of the Jnana Ashram, Parlikad, the well-known exponent of Advaita, addressed the gathering.



Justice K. S. Venkataraman, High Court Judge, Madras, addressed the 'Ramana Bhakta Sabha' members, in Madras.

RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA, MADRAS

The Jayanthi was celebrated on December 24, 1967 at Dharmalayam, 94, Mowbrays Road, Alwarpet, Madras. After Veda parayana, Mr. Justice K. S. Venkataraman spoke of the inescapable



Seated L to R: Kum. Savitaben Nanji Kalidas Mehta, Sri S. K. Patil, former Minister, Sri Swami Poornananda Tirtha, Sri N. D. Sahukar, Sri P. B. Kotak and Sri Ushakant Ladiwala. Smt. Niruben Kapadia is seen singing Gujarathi songs in praise of Sri Bhagavan.



DELHI: Sri M. L. Sondhi, M.P., offering flowers to the beautiful portrait of Sri Bhagavan, during the Jayanthi celebration. Next to him is Prof. K. Swaminathan.

spiritual reality in which we have our being, whether or no we recognize it. After a series of songs by Shri R. M. Sundaram, Mrs. Sulochana Natarajan, Mrs. Sarada Chinnaswami and Mrs. Lakshmi Sivaraman, the meeting ended with *arati* and distribution of prasadam.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The Jayanthi meeting was held on December 18, 1967 in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Curzon Road, New Delhi. After a welcome speech in Sanskrit and Veda Parayana, Shri M. L. Sondhi, M.P., spoke on the relevance of Sri Bhagavan to modern man, who badly needed the "still centre" of *advaita jnana* to enable him to orientate and balance himself in the whirl of contemporary life. He said, "Human life, both individual and social, is a continuous growth and there is no growth without tension. Shakti, which impels growth, should hold perpetual dialogue with Shanti, which is the root of our being and the heart of the universe."

Mrs. Mahalingam rendered songs by Sri Bhagavan and Sri Muruganar. Professor K. Swaminathan described the Sunday meetings of the Kendra and its efforts to establish a permanent home in the Capital.

VISITORS AND PILGRIMS FROM ABROAD

M. Jean Herbert, the well-known French author and publisher, an old devotee of Bhagavan, and his wife paid a visit to the Ashram. M. Herbert was interested to see all the places in the Ashram including the kitchen where he was in Sri Bhagavan's company during his visit long

ago. In fact his old associations with Sri Bhagavan were quite fresh in his mind. He said on leaving, that he and his wife would like to return one day for a longer stay.

Besides the visitors from abroad mentioned in our 1st issue there were quite a number of other visitors for shorter or longer stays during the last quarter.* The circumstances in which some of the visitors became interested in Bhagavan's life and teaching have been described in their letters which we give below as they might be of interest to readers of the *Mountain Path*.

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Some Years ago, when I was still a member of the 'S.R.F.', a co-brother gave me the book "Talks with Ramana Maharshi Vol. I". The teachings contained in this book appealed immediately to my innermost being. I, however, continued my spiritual practice on the lines of the 'S.R.F.' for several years. It was in 1966 that it occurred to me that I should thereafter follow the path of Sri Ramana. I also felt a desire to live at Bhagavan's ashram for some time so that I might benefit by the spiritual atmosphere of the place. It is now three months since I arrived

* Mark Antrobus, United Kingdom.

Vaclav Cech, Czechoslovakia.

Anne Ansermet, Switzerland.

Betty Muriel Austin, United Kingdom.

Van der Linde Hermine, Dutch.

Rina Vredendregt, Belgium.

Swami Narikutti, Australia.

Louise Marie Lanvin, France.

Nadeshca Mackman, Sweden.

Gunter Lowack, W. Germany.

Lucy Cornelissen, W. Germany.

Marlies Hibschenberger, Germany.

Baio Regina Sendras, Portugal.

Carmen Orosz, U.K.

Leonard Oswald Bowen, Australia.

Victoria Orfaly, American, U.S.A.

Edgar Johannes Krayss, Switzerland.

Le Prince Jacqueline, France.

Dauguet Yvonne, France.

John Hislop, U.S.A.

Magdalena Hislop, U.S.A.

Giles Francis Dubuis, U.K.

Lewis Henry Warren, Australia.

Roger Henninger, France.

George Ernest Oakenfold, U.K.

Alain Chapeller, France.

Ronald Lee, U.S.A.

Erna Feig, W. Germany.

Yoytech Kurka, Czechoslovakia.

Irene E. Wolfington, U.S.A.

here. This is my first visit to this place and to India. I quickly got accustomed to the ways of living prevailing here. Everybody is friendly and helpful. The management does its best for the visitors. Everybody is left free to follow his own sadhana depending upon his spiritual development and mental make-up. Nobody is obliged to take part in the pujas or any other religious ceremonies. Bhagavan who brought me to this place is also taking care of me here and he will let me remain here as long as it is His Will.



Horst Rutkowski

HORST RUTKOWSKI,
West Germany

It was through the Cambridge University Buddhist Society that a couple of copies of *The Mountain Path* came my way. I read some of the articles about the ashram, the life of Sri Bhagavan and some of His sayings. One article by Christmas Humphreys in which he said that he knew that on meeting Sri Bhagavan he had contacted that which is "unborn, unconditioned, unmade", to use the words of the Buddha speaking on the state of nirvana, particularly made me want to find out more. This desire was made even stronger when I saw the photograph of him.

Months later, when I was staying at the newly founded Tibetan monastery in Scotland, I came across the booklet "The Gospel of Ramana Maharshi", and met also a French couple who had been to this ashram and who told me of the sense of peace and spirituality that pervades the atmosphere here.

I was intending to come to India in any case to follow up my interest in Indian spirituality, and what I had heard and read made me make the Sri Ramanashramam one of my main objectives.

I was not disappointed when I arrived. There is something indefinable in the air—something that helps you realize what Indian religion is all about, and definitely something that

makes for fruitful meditation. Perhaps one could say that it is the feeling that Sri Bhagavan is not dead, but is still guiding the steps of the meditator from within.

JAMES WHELAN,
United Kingdom.

Some three or four years ago I gradually became aware of an inner urge to know more about India. There was no outer reason for this, nor had I ever had any particular interest in India before. It was something like a vague nostalgia. I felt as if India possessed some hidden mystery; which I wanted to discover. I began to read books about India, and one of the first books I came across was H. H. Von Veltheim's "Der Atem Indiens" (The Breath of India). The author gives a long and detailed account of his visit to Sri Ramanasramam, which took place in 1937 or 1938. This is how Bhagavan revealed Himself to me.

At that time I was not even aware of the existence of Vedanta philosophy, nor did I understand anything of Bhagavan's teachings. But I was so deeply impressed by His divine glory, that I began to read all I could find about Vedanta. Eight months afterwards I discovered a book on Bhagavan and His teachings. This was "Der Weg zum Selbst" by Heinrich Zimmer. After reading it I became a convinced devotee.

From the day I first came to know about Bhagavan I have never forgotten Him. The thought of Him has haunted me ever since. Although He was no more physically present I felt that I had to go to Tiruvannamalai, and that nothing on earth could prevent me.

Now Bhagavan's Grace has enabled me to come here. During my whole stay in India He has guided and blessed me in a marvellous way.

RINA VREDENBREGT,
Belgium.

Towards the end of 1961 I was carelessly looking through the books in a bookshop in Constance, a town in Southern Germany, when I came across a German translation of Mouni Sadhu's book "In Days of Great Peace". The frontispiece of the book was a photograph of Ramana Maharshi. The immediate effect of this photograph upon me was one of great attraction. At the same time I felt a great familiarity, as though I had known Bhagavan's face for ages. From this time onward for a period of about three years, Bhagavan's face often appeared before my

mind in the course of my daily activities. Although I was not practising meditation at that time, I shortly afterwards started to meditate now and then and, quite automatically, turned to Bhagavan's face as an object of meditation.



Mrs. Hibschenberger

A period of two or three years must have elapsed after this before I wrote to Ramanasram. My hesitation to write was mainly due to my uncertainty and ignorance, as to what facilities and opportunities existed for a Westerner to visit an Indian ashram. I knew no person who had ever contemplated or made such a visit. The Ashram's prompt reply to my

letter with an invitation to come came as a welcome and thrilling surprise.

Thus I left for India by sea in October 1964, but went to the north of India first, visiting several holy places which I had read about. However during this time I was constantly aware of being pulled towards the South and felt Bhagavan's presence very strongly whilst in the Himalayas, as if calling me to Arunachala. At times this call became so strong that it became almost physical in its intensity and an urgency to fulfill the real purpose of my visit to India, began to possess me.

When I finally started southward for Ramanashram it was with a feeling of relief, and my final arrival at Arunachala seemed to be almost a home-coming, away from the trials and tribulations of the outside world.

My stay at Arunachala confirmed the opening in my life of a spiritual awareness which I had always been seeking, but its appearance and continued presence since that time, has been a process of rediscovery of "the old" rather than a disclosure of "the new". I feel that I have received Bhagavan's Grace and this feeling of familiarity of which I speak seems to be common to many devotees who have already experienced this Grace. Here, I am now for the second time, I am happy I am at my 'home'.

MRS. MARLIES HIBSCHENBERGER,
West Germany.

It was in 1950, in France, that, on opening a random a magazine, I was attracted by Sri Bhagavan's last photograph. There were only some words about His life and His Mahasamadhi. Immediately a kind of prayer rose within me that I might have the *darshan* of a realized soul. Such was the power which His look in that small photograph had on me for a few seconds.

He fulfilled my prayer in a strange way: In 1954 Swami Ramdas came to Genève and there I was blessed by His brief *darshan*. In 1958 in an almost miraculous way, I got an opportunity to come to India and to spend some weeks in Anandashram. Sri Ramdas (who had his realization after having the blessing of Sri Bhagavan) advised me to visit Sri Ramanasramam.

I arrived at the Ramanasramam in June 1957 on the anniversary of the Mahasamadhi of Bhagavan's mother. As soon as I arrived I was taken for a '*pradakshina*' around the sacred Hill. Later, when I was shown the small room in which Sri Bhagavan attained Maha Samadhi my breath stopped short on reading "April 14th". For that was the date of my first landing on the blessed Indian soil. Everything was His Grace and answer to my prayer.

Now after some years Bhagavan again opens His wonderful Ashram to this pilgrim. His grace is here. He makes us feel quite at home. We can meet Him every where; in the Meditation Hall we sit at His feet; in Skandasramam He opens an oasis of beauty and silence; in the big Temple of the town His welcome took the form of unforgettable and beautiful celebrations. Even in the dining hall His loving care is felt in the kitchen service and perfect food. Is there any word to express our gratitude to Him? And to Him through you all who are ever at His service?

MARIE LANVIN,
France.

There was a light in a German boy's eyes and now when thinking back I am sure it is this light which originally drove me to Tiruvannamalai. This light was quite a fascinating one, making me suddenly aware that there must be "something beyond" of great interest as all which composed my life before meeting with this light appeared suddenly grey, dull, dead.

On a French ship bound for Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia, that German boy, Wilhelm, was moving around quietly among the agitated crowd of youngsters around him but nevertheless there was somehow a more active power in him

which struck us, my cousin Roland and myself, and awoke in us the desire to find out what it was. Before landing in Tahiti we had time to find out that he had spent quite a number of years in India and had become one of its warmest lovers, and also that Tiruvannamalai seemed to



Jacqueline Leprince

have played quite a big part in his stay there which gave me the strong desire to go myself to this very particular place and find out what could be seen or hidden there.

Since my youth India had always been of great fascination to me but somehow for my first big trip abroad fate had driven me in quite another direction. I knew anyway that some day I would reach India and finally that day arrived, two months ago, when my girl friend Yvonne and myself landed at Bombay, ready to start the discovery of this "promised land" which has been so much talked and written about.

When we reached Tiruvannamalai, a few weeks after our arrival in India, we knew that already these two girls were not the same any more, as India with all its trials, its shocks, its contradictions, had awakened a part of our being which had been asleep all these years. And how not to feel passionately attached to a country which has such power to awaken in our being a sensitivity neglected for so long.

From all the places we have been till now, Tiruvannamalai has proved to be the best "sensitivity awakener" for us both. Now please don't force me to give the exact causes. For surely there is a "special" atmosphere here. Is it due to Bhagavan's body which has been here before? Is it Bhagavan's spirit floating all around the place? Is it Arunachala? Is it the light I see in some people's eyes (the same light which has been originally our leader to Tiruvannamalai)? Please don't ask me to determine exactly what it

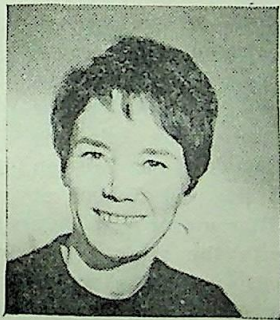
is as, finally, when thinking more and more about it all I can only come to the conclusion that it is just one and the same thing. And, whatever, I could name, it, as a living experience, it is the most wonderful thing I could ever have dreamt of.

JACQUELINE LEPRINCE & YVONNE DAUGUET,
France.

I first heard of Bhagavan from a friend in a Zen Meditation group in London. He lent me some books on Bhagavan and his sayings and after reading them plus some copies of *The Mountain Path* I saw the same truths and practice to which I had been led by my Buddhist enquiries. In particular I felt an affinity with the practice recommended.

I decided to leave London and head for Japan for some training in Zazen and a stay at Ramanasramam in Bhagavan's Presence seemed an essential stop en route. The general atmosphere around Arunachala and the Ashram life in general have been very conducive to my sadhana and I consider myself very fortunate to have been led to such a beautiful spot.

LEWIS WARREN,
Australia.



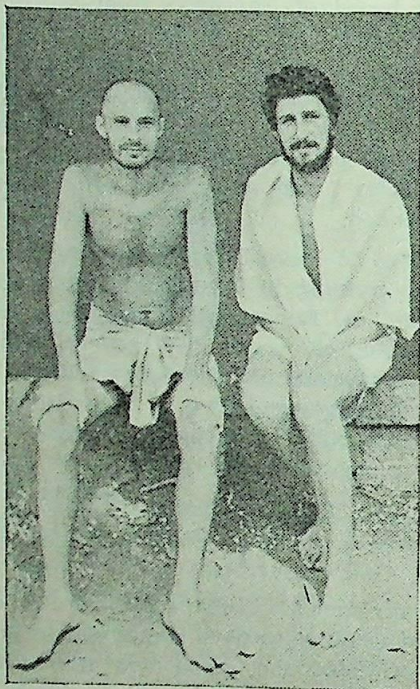
Yvonne Dauguet

From my first view of the ashram I rejoiced in the right decision to have come, and in the peace which pervaded the grove and now filled me. Looking a little further into the ashram and its activities and the short explorations on Arunachala confirmed my original impressions. The following day I went on a *pradakshina* which also thrilled me.

Then, a couple of days later, after breakfast, leaving for a second walk around the hill, I felt a slight pain in the stomach which at that time I disregarded as mild indigestion. However, it lingered, but by the time I took it seriously I had already passed the point of no return. Nearing the town I had to sit down for relief and gradually these stops became more frequent and of longer duration till I finally came to a halt on a kerb in town, with no will to go further. Luckily a *jatka* came into view which brought me to ashram (although I was debating whether to go to the hospital in the town), and, as I was now convinced I was a victim of food-poisoning, I was mildly surprised to see life in the ashram continuing as normal (my apologies to the kitchen for ever doubting them!).

It transpired that I had had a minor heart attack and a couple of hours later, the pain re-

lieved, we were moved to another room ideal for my recuperation, although my friend Lewis had been informed of the move just five minutes before my return. And in the care of my ideal doctor Hugo Maier,¹ everything looked rosier. Again I was happy for a right decision—to return to the ashram—and inwardly bowed to and thanked Bhagavan.



Lewis Warren and George Oakenfold.

Kindness is for me the essence of the ashram, as of Bhagavan himself. The enforced rest has proved useful, perhaps even necessary and illuminating. It has been a time of reflection and a lot of problems I had been manufacturing have disappeared of their own accord. With different members and guests of the ashram dropping by, and all my requirements—more—bought to me

¹ See *Ashram Bulletin* of our April '67, p. 169.

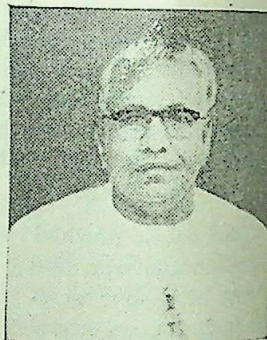
I have been spoiled like a child and above all that, guided and protected by a smiling Bhagavan.

Already out of bed as I write this I can see the first slopes of Arurachala rising above, mauve and peaceful against the clear bright sky. The morning is joy. It is not so much a question of how I came to Bhagavan as of how I am still coming. But how grateful I am to have come thus far.

GEORGE OAKENFOLD,
U.K.

OBITUARY

In the early hours of January 16 Professor K. Subrahmanyam passed away peacefully while asleep at his home "Ramaneeyam" in Nagapatnam. As English lecturer in Sri Minakshi College, Chidambaram, the Andhra Christian College, Guntur and Loyola College, Madras, he achieved immense popularity, while later as Vice-Principal of Vivekananda College and Madurai College he revealed remarkable powers of leadership and organization. In the interval between two spells of college teaching, he "retreated" for some years into the Ramakrishna Mission Residential School at Uttaramerur and assisted revered "Anna" with the same efficiency and touching devotion with which he supported Prof. K. Swaminathan at Annamalai University and Prof. D. S. Sarma at Vivekananda College.



His last few years were spent in deep study of his chosen favourites, Eckhart and Ramana, and in quiet contemplation. Readers will find much food for thought in his solid con-

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, cordially invites the readers of "THE MOUNTAIN PATH", and others too, to participate in the 18th Mahanirvana Celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi on the 25th April, 1968 and to partake of the munificent Grace of Sri Bhagavan.

tributions in the Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1946) and in the July '64 and January '65 issues of the *Mountain Path*.

His first visit to the ashram, which took place in September 1940, is vividly described by him in the Jayanthi (January 1966) number of the *Mountain Path*. Since then he visited the ashram many times, renewed contact with the resident devotees and helped the management with valuable suggestions. We offer our sympathy to his family and the large circle of his loving and beloved old boys.

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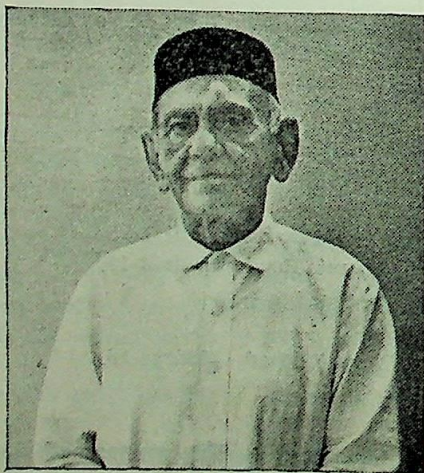
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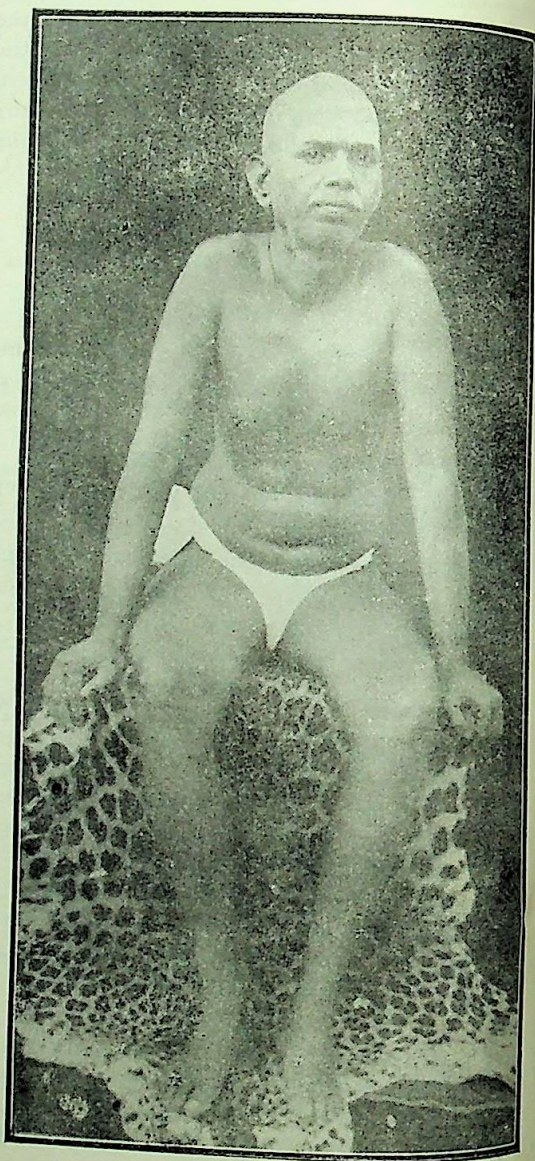
Sri FRAMJI DORABJI

SRI FRAMJI DORABJI, a Parsi businessman originally belonging to Bombay, but now settled in Madras, is an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He comes of an orthodox family strictly following the religious practices of the Zoroastrians. From his boyhood he was interested in saints and holy men and he met a number of them. The association with one of them near Bombay was, however, far from happy. The latter began to exercise an unwholesome control over his devotee who tried in vain to overcome his evil influence. But happily for him he heard of Sri Bhagavan from his late brother, Sri Dadiba, who had read a review of Paul Brunton's book, "A Search in Secret India" in *The Sunday Times*. And his brother strongly advised him to go and see Sri Bhagavan.

It was, however, some months before he could come down to Tiruvannamalai. At last in 1937 he and a party of four others paid a visit to Sri Ramanasramam and had darshan of Sri Bhagavan. The moment he saw Sri Bhagavan he began to feel an extraordinary veneration for



Sri Framji Dorabji



Him. In Sri Bhagavan's presence he experienced intense peace and happiness. He became convinced that here at last was the Master, the Sadguru, for whom he had been searching. He therefore repeated his visits as often as he could. Soon his fear of the 'holy man' in Bombay grew less and less until it totally disappeared.

Living at such a great distance he could not come to Tiruvannamalai as often as he wished. But in 1942 his business activities were, to his great delight, shifted from Bombay to Madras and this enabled him to visit the Ashram more often. He looked upon this change as a mark of Sri Bhagavan's Grace. During his visits he never put any questions to Sri Bhagavan but was quite content to sit silently in His presence. Nor did Sri Bhagavan ask him anything about his sadhana. But somehow the questions which he would have

liked to ask were answered by Sri Bhagavan in the course of His talks with some of the other persons who were present. He found that the path of enquiry was not suitable for him and that the alternative path shown by Sri Bhagavan, namely *surrender* was the path he should follow. At the same time he began to realize the inner significance of his own religion. He therefore, continued to remain a staunch Zoroastrian without losing his devotion to Sri Bhagavan.

Although Sri Framji neither put any questions to Sri Bhagavan nor talked to Him freely Sri Bhagavan was quite aware of his devotion. A small incident shows this clearly. Sri Framji used always to come into Sri Bhagavan's presence wearing the traditional dress of Zoroastrians, including a black conical cap. One day, however,

he came without his cap. Sri Bhagavan noticed this and later told one of his attendants about it. Evidently Sri Bhagavan had no objection to any one wearing the dress he was accustomed to and it was not at all necessary that the cap should be removed out of respect to Him. When this came to the ears of Sri Framji he wondered at the broad outlook of Sri Bhagavan and thereafter put on his cap as usual!

Sri Framji, his wife, daughter and son, are all staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan and still continue to visit the Ashram frequently. They have built a small cottage for themselves, not far from the Ashram, with the object of making longer stays near Sri Bhagavan's Ashram. All of them regard Sri Bhagavan as their Guide and Guru and the Ashram as their 'home'.

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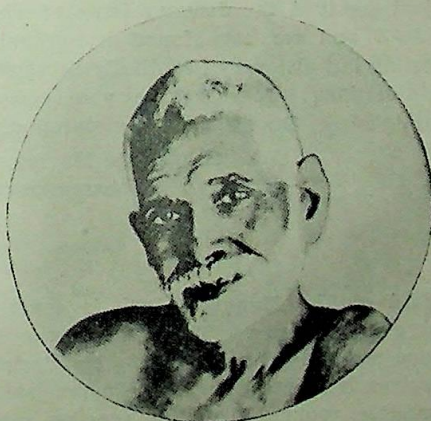
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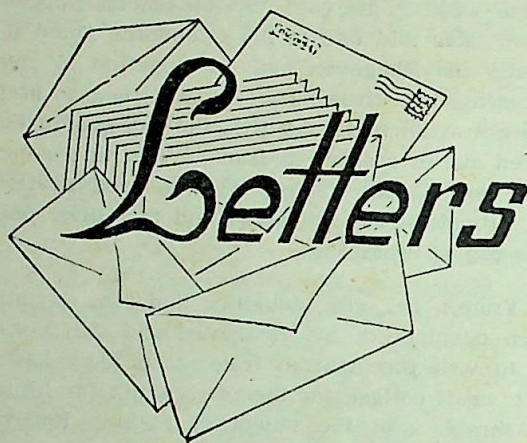
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to the EDITOR

JANUARY 1968

I see no reason to doubt that "Jan" is the most valuable number you have hitherto produced, as it is the best typographically also. You might have some protests from Europe on the ground of the standing promise of universality, but none on any ground from me.

Congratulations.

TENENCE GRAY,
Monte Carlo.

The next issue will clarify the position regarding protests, if any, since it deals with Bhagavan's poetry.

EDITOR.

(2)

I have just received the January issue of *The Mountain Path* and we have found it not only very interesting but also very beautifully illustrated. Congratulations! Mr. Osborne, your editorial is a joy to read. Once again, congratulations!

GLADYS DE MEUTER,
Johannesburg.

(3)

The arrival of *The Mountain Path* is eagerly anticipated every quarter. This time's issue is specially fine and the Grace on the fly leaf facing the frontispiece is indeed much to be appreciated. It is a humble request that this practice may kindly be continued in subsequent issues and some words spoken or written by the Great Soul may be quoted on the fly leaf as a regular feature.

The Mountain Path forms an important aid to acquisition of full knowledge of the Self. There is a long way to go yet, but His silent Grace is

there and while it is there, there is hope in this life.

Please accept these few words of appreciation for good work well done.

DR. ARUN K. MITRA.

(4)

.... Both your efforts (Sacred Poetry and Threefold Scripture) are compact, clear and refreshingly frank. You speak from a certain high stance.

K. SWAMINATHAN,
New Delhi.

(5)

I have meanwhile received the Jan. 1968 issue of *The Mountain Path*. It is a delightful experience for me to go through articles, including yours, in this and other numbers of this remarkable magazine.....

I note with much interest your opinion that Greek civilization was originally in line with the Vedic. In my investigation into mysticism in poetry I myself felt like believing that from the Neo-Platonists back to Plato and Pythagoras and further back there was an unexplored region where the Greek spirit was quite akin to the Vedic.....

A. C. Bose,
New Delhi.

(6)

I am just an ordinary individual, thoroughly entangled in *samsara* and my only virtue is that I constantly think of Bhagavan. My struggles are

not yet over and on the night of Tuesday I wept in my sleep sorely asking for Bhagavan's grace. I was awakened by my son, sleeping beside me, and I could feel my chest aching even then. The next day, as though in answer to my prayers, I received *The Mountain Path* (January issue) and this has offered me great consolation. I am writing to you as there is a great desire to divulge this experience to a person who will understand the significance.

R. RAJAGOPALAN,
New Delhi.

BHAGAVAN IN UNIVERSITIES

I have before me your correspondence to *Studies in Comparative Religion*, page 96, Vol. I No. 2, Spring 1967. I have owned your two edited volumes on Sri Ramana Maharshi for a few months and value them greatly. I completed my doctor's dissertation on a comparative study of Sri Ramana and Martin Heidegger in 1964 and received the Ph.D. from the American Academy of Asian Studies, San Francisco. As you may or may not know three other doctorates have been granted there for Maharshi study and a course in his teachings is offered regularly there by a faculty member I know of no group of students of the writings of Sri Ramana in San Francisco, although he is a favourite with students at the Academy and his works and literature about him are available at the Cultural Integration Fellowship's San Francisco Ashram.

PAUL E. HERMAN.
U.S.A.

seems that as one progresses in sadhana it is possible to know instantaneously whether one is reading something produced by the former or the latter.

I should like to add that even small articles of this nature more than justify the existence of *The Mountain Path* for devotees of Bhagavan. Thank you..... Japa, it would mean—irrespective of the qualifications of teacher and pupil, is by its very nature bound to succeed in lifting the mind to a higher plane of consciousness, when practised earnestly. Any comments from the Editor?

SARAH FARRAND,
London.

Sincere and one-pointed effort be it Japa or prayer help in lifting the mind to a higher plane of consciousness but only up to a point. If the Guru is not qualified he is bound to slip up sooner or later, when the disciple's need may be most vital. Grace is needed. However great our effort it will be no more than a drop merging with the boundless sea of Grace. Only the genuine Guru is the source of Grace on the plane of sadhana.

EDITOR.

CELIBACY?

What was the Maharshi's teaching about sex life for married sadhakas who seek Liberation?

GERARD GRIMARDIA,
Elizabethville, France.

The Maharshi did not demand celibacy, as some spiritual Masters have. He expected his followers to lead a normal family life, except those of them who were sadhus, and he showed interest in reports of marriages and births among them.

If asked whether celibacy was necessary he would sometimes say that it is one help among others and sometimes draw the attention of the questioner to the real meaning of 'brahmacharya', the Sanskrit word for 'celibacy', meaning inherence in Brahman. In general he taught inner rather than outer discipline. This meant that the aspirant should aim at a state in which all joy and happiness is found in Brahman, not in the apparent realities of the physical world.

EDITOR.

GUIDE TO EXPERIENCE

May I say what a joy it is to read articles like that by the musician Kovai-Mani which describes how his father Nilakanta came to the Maharshi. The effect is such that one seems to pass through the gateway of the words into the living experience with the devotee as the blazing eyes of the Master pour forth their grace. One is then overwhelmed with love for and gratitude to this Master by whose Grace we have found the Supreme Teaching in this life time.

Pieces like this are far more than mere words printed on a page; one cannot help feeling that something like spiritual power communicates itself to the sensitive reader causing an immediate uplifting of consciousness. This perhaps is the test which separates truly inspired writing from that which results from mental knowledge and it

SLEEP

On page 331 of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' it is stated that Bhagavan said "The Self is pure consciousness in sleep." I have been trying

and trying to understand this but have failed. If you mean that sleep is 'nidra', how can 'nidra' be pure consciousness when one is not conscious at all in it? Again, it is said that the Self is the Witness of the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Sri Bhagavan has graciously consented to explain all this on pp. 331-334 but still I fail to understand it. I shall thank you if you will throw some light on it in the 'Letters to the Editor' in *The Mountain Path*.

M. E. AMROLIA.
Devlali.

It is best to concentrate on the practical not the theoretical meaning of such sayings. Bhagavan says: "The Self is pure consciousness in sleep; it evolves as AHAM ('I') without the IDAM (this) in the transition stage, and manifests as AHAM and IDAM in the waking state. The individual's experience is by means of the aham only. So he must aim at realization in the way indicated (by means of the transitional 'I'). Otherwise the sleep-experience does not matter to him. If the transitional 'I' be realized the substratum is found and that leads to the goal."

Sometimes when you first wake up from sleep consciousness returns before it is focussed as definite consciousness of anything. This is what Bhagavan means by the 'transition stage'. In this stage you just are, so he calls it aham or 'I'. As soon as it focusses you are this or that, so he calls it IDAM, 'this'. What he means is that you should prolong the experience of pure unfocussed I-ness. You will find that it can continue as a substratum underlying the I-am-this consciousness even after that returns and that it is perfect bliss. It is not to be confused with day-dreaming. Day-dreaming ('I might be that') comes after IDAM (I-am-this), whereas I-am comes before it. What is needed is to try to have this experience not to theorise about it.

EDITOR.

SURRENDER

1. I can suspend thoughts for a few minutes but I am aware of the activities of the outer world. When the exercise is prolonged time passes unawares and I am not sure whether I was asleep or conscious. Is this what you call "the suspension of thought while retaining consciousness?"

2. Can one practise bhakti-marga along with Self-enquiry?

3. Bhagavan said complete surrender is to leave everything to him. He knows what is best for the devotee and the devotee should not want what he himself thinks best. But a doubt assails me: should I not wish for the basic needs of life, such as simple food and clothing?

G. SIVAPRAGASAM
Vavuniya, Ceylon.

1. It can be but you have to beware of what is called 'laya', that is of a passive sort of state akin to day-dreaming.

2. Yes.

3. Who is it that wishes? And for who? Is there any anxiety that if God or Self is not reminded of the wishes they will not be met? Cannot God or Bhagavan be trusted to bring about what is necessary?

EDITOR.

I AND SELF - ENQUIRY

I began doing meditation every day in the Old Hall in the Ashram just a year ago. I admit that I had not so far attempted Self enquiry and I was wondering how it was possible for a man to keep asking himself this simple question "Who am I?" For it is a simple question and no one can keep his mind engaged by this kind of investigation, I thought. Hence I was following a different technique to control my mind.

Quite recently a very interesting thing happened. I was much agitated over a personal problem. It was a simple one, but it held my attention for nearly a week. A man who is worried does not usually sleep well, but during the period of my worry I quite often pondered on the problem which worried me and fell into a state of stupor.

It is clear from this that one-pointedness is akin to a state of thoughtlessness which is usually associated with sleep. In other words a simple question could enable me to eliminate most of my thoughts from my mind. I asked myself the question "Why then is Self-enquiry impossible?" The answer is I don't consider the question "Who am I?" a personal and important problem. I then went to the Old Hall and started Self-enquiry treating it as my most personal problem and found it really successful.

Bhagavan has taught us the way. I write these lines in the hope that some of your readers may be similarly benefited if they are in my position.

P. V. SRINIVASAN,
Tiruvannamalai.

Shine as my Guru,
making me free from
faults and worthy of Thy
Grace, Oh Arunachala!

— *The Marital Garland
of Letters*, verse 19.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who
meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

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JULY 1968

No. 3

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verse in Telugu and Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Bhagavan's own handwriting.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Words

3. తనలో తనువుండ తాను జడ మా
తనువందు స్వట్టు తలచు — మనాజుడు
చిత్రములో నున్నది చిత్రమన కాథార
వస్త్ర మనియెంచు వాడు.

3. తன்னుడు దనువిరుక్తతానకు కడவுలకు
తన్ను నిరుప్పతాత తానున్ను — మன்னవన్
చిత్తరత్తి నున్నలాతకు చిత్తరత్తుకు కూతార
వత్తర మెன்றెన్ను వాన్.

3. While in fact the body is in the Self, he who thinks that the Self is within the insentient body is like one who considers the cloth of the screen which supports a cinema to be contained within the picture.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

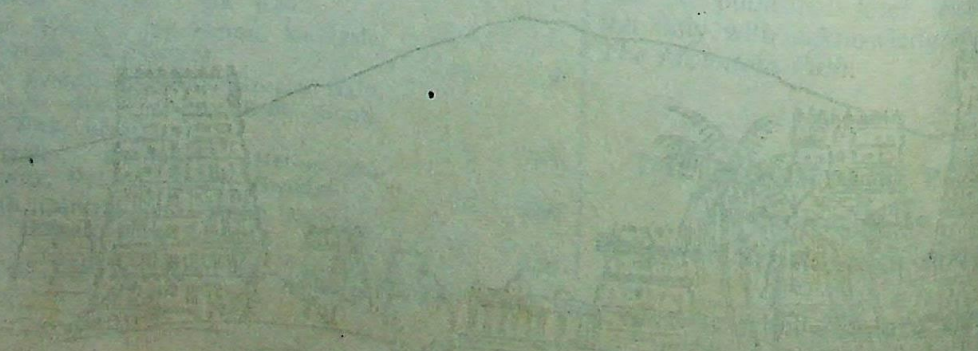
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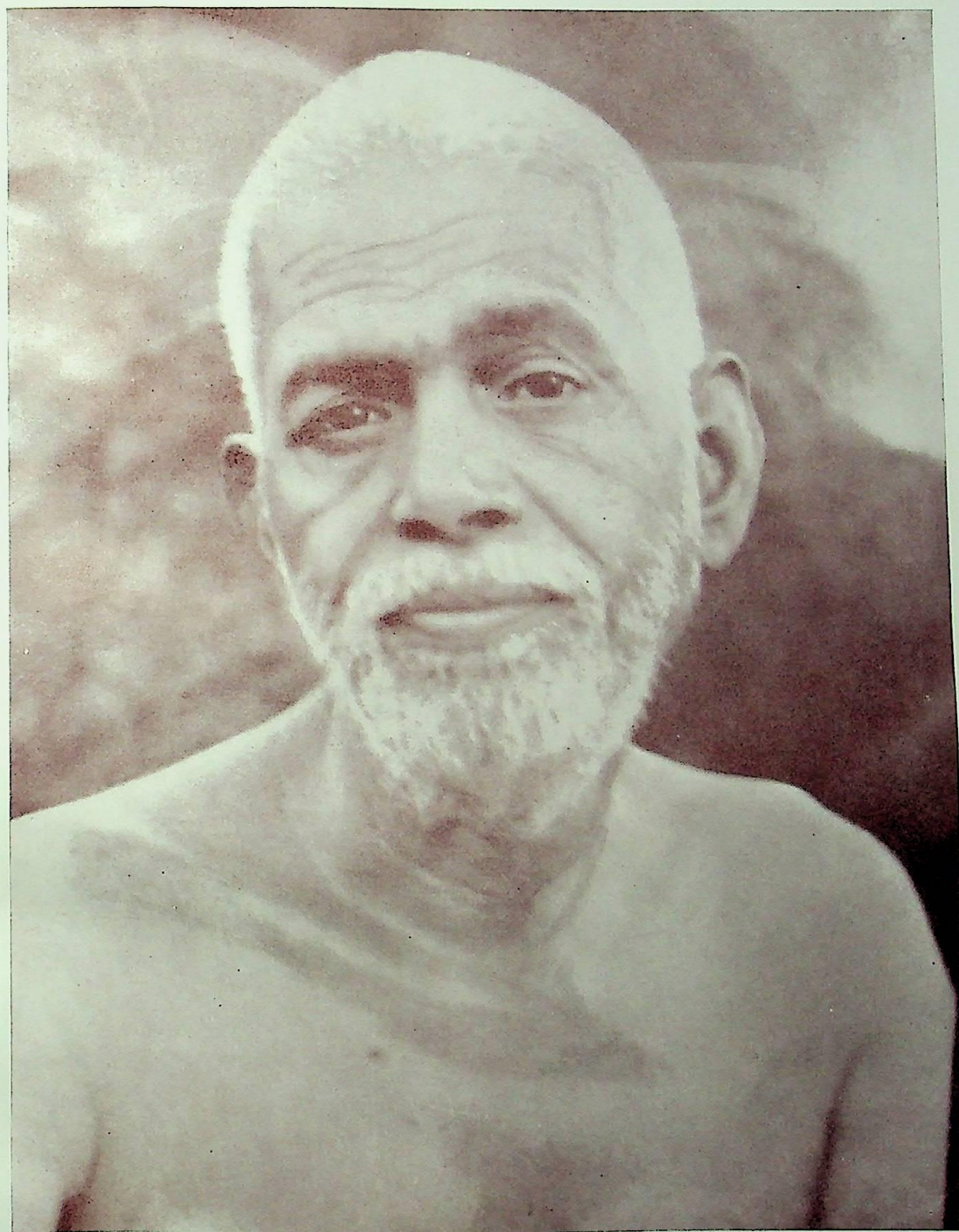
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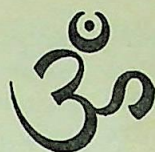
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While in fact the body is in the Self, he who
thinks that the Self is within the material body
as like one who considers the cloth of the screen
the picture supports a cinema to be continued within
the picture.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAN, MADRAS







THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. V

JULY, 1968

No. 3

'THIS' AND 'THAT'

.....

Editorial

WHY should a quest be necessary? Why should a man not grow naturally into his true state, like a horse or an oak-tree? Why should man alone, of all creatures, be tempted to a misuse of his faculties and have to curb his desires in order to grow to his true breadth and stature? This involves the question what differentiates man from other creatures. Some psychologists and biologists have represented the difference simply as greater intelligence and ability due to a more developed brain. This is patently untrue. Many creatures have greater ability than man in one direction or another. A hawk has keener sight, a migratory bird has a better memory for places and directions, a dog has a stronger sense of smell, a bat a wider range of hearing. What really distinguishes man is self-consciousness, that he not only is a man but knows that he is a man, is consciously a man. This may be called greater intelligence, but not in the commonly understood sense of outwardly turned intelligence. It implies the conscious use of his faculties, the power of deciding how and

whether to use them. And this power is also a necessity. Having the power to direct his faculties imposes on a man the necessity of doing so, since even refusal to do so would be his choice or direction and not spontaneous, as with other creatures.

This is expressed theologically in the dogma that God gave man free will, the will to obey God or disobey, and thus to work out his own weal or woe. Intellectuals are apt to scoff at such dogmas, but they are only picturesque enunciations of fundamental truths. A man cannot simply use his faculties naturally as a bird or animal can, because there is no natural man-action as there is natural hawk-action or sheep-action. Man, of course, has certain natural instincts, just as a bird or animal has (the instincts to eat, to procreate, to preserve his life, for instance), but he may or may not choose to obey them in any specific situation in the complexities of life. His self-conscious existence as man forces on him a choice of uses for his faculties. Even the attempt to use them in what he considered

the natural way would be a choice. He would be sure to find some one who would contest it. This choice is what is called free will. Free will is therefore not only a prerogative but an obligation for man.

Free will, thus understood, has nothing to do with destiny. It is a power which man is compelled by his own nature to use, whether the use he makes of it is predestined or not. If I have to decide whether to spend this evening at a dance or in meditation or whether to strike or forgive some one who has insulted me, the responsibility of deciding rests with me just the same whether the outcome is predetermined or not. If it is predetermined, it is my own past habit-forming and character-forming decisions in this and previous lifetimes which have predetermined it; and this decision in its turn will help to condition my mind, thus determining future ones. In any case, since I do not know which of two decisions is predetermined, I have to choose one or the other.

But, it may be said, the necessity of making decisions as to the use of one's faculties does not imply the necessity of a spiritual quest. All men have to make decisions, whereas very few set forth on the quest. That is only too true. As far back as the Bhagavad Gita it was already said that "Out of thousands perhaps one seeks Realization."¹ What is implied is only the possibility, not the necessity, of the quest.

The quest brings the possibility of rising above the normal human state; but this involves also the possibility of falling below it. This is why the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures warn so insistently to make good use of one's human birth, because if this one is misused another may not be so easily attainable. And it is no implacable outside power which thrusts a man lower down in the scale if he misuses his human opportunities to rise higher; it is the impersonal law of cause and effect. A crow is not blameworthy for rapacity, nor a cat for cruelty, nor a goat for lust, but a man who allows such qualities to dominate him has volun-

tarily given them ascendancy over higher possibilities. If, in this way, he has forced his mind into a subhuman mold in this lifetime, he must expect his body to take the same mold in the next, since the body is only a reflection or condensation of the mind.

Naturally this does not imply that every one who fails to take the quest falls below the human state. There are many gradations within that state. There is the possibility of birth and death, birth and death, birth and death, in an apparently endless and meaningless round; but in the end every one is brought to the point of rising above the human state or falling below it. And between each human death and rebirth there are heavens and hells to reap.

The quest does not mean simply a cultural interest in spirituality, such as one may take in music or philosophy; it means a total dedication. It means making Realization the aim and purpose of life. And since eventual Realization is by nature the purpose of life, those who undertake the quest are the only ones who have understood life aright and live it purposefully, using it instead of being used by it.

Once taken, the quest may assume forms. It is apt to appear primarily under the guise of getting or giving, but in fact both occur, for it is only by making oneself small enough to pass through the eye of a needle that one can expand to all infinity. On a yogic or tantric path one is developing latent powers beyond the ken of the ordinary mundane person, but if the course is to succeed it demands the simultaneous surrender not only of the indulgence of desires but of the desires themselves. On a devotional path the perpetual craving is to love, give, surrender, to be nothing in the hands of God, but power pours into this nothing, this self-naughted worshipper. It is safer to concentrate on giving. As Christ said, only he who gives up his life will find it. By thus giving without seeking one attains the kingdom of heaven; and Christ also said: "Attain first the kingdom of heaven and all else shall be

¹ Bhagavad Gita: VIII, 3.

added to you." If one seeks to attain first all else the kingdom of heaven is not likely to be added.

Before a man is drawn to the quest he is directly conscious of only one being, which could therefore be called 'this': this which wants coffee for breakfast, this which has tooth-ache, this which decides to call on so-and-so or to read such-and-such a book. Other people, things, events, are known to him only indirectly, through his senses (including his reason, which the Hindus call the 'inner sense'). But the time may come when he apprehends being of another kind: potent, unconfined, awe-inspiring, which he may think of as 'That'. Henceforth the dominant theme of his life is the relationship between 'this' and 'That', between the individual who experiences, classifies and decides and the dimly apprehended Reality. It may be largely a matter of mental training whether he regards 'That' as other than 'this' or as the hidden Self of it. In any case, theoretical conclusions help him very little. What opens before him is a dynamic venture, the attempt to subordinate 'this' to 'That'. The Maharshi said: "Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality it is only a means for realizing it without name and form. That alone is true Realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It."²

The attempt to do this is the quest. Becoming convinced of the identity of 'this' with 'That' is not realizing it, in fact is only the preliminary position from which to set out on the quest of Realization. 'This' feels not only the power but also the grace and pervading beauty of 'That' and is strongly attracted towards it. Whether it calls 'That' 'God' or 'Self', 'this' is shaken by powerful waves of love and devotion for it. The attraction is such that 'this' feels itself being drawn in to be devoured and merged in 'That' and senses that the absorption will produce the peace beyond understanding; but at the same time 'this' struggles against

being absorbed, clinging tenaciously to the life which Christ bade it give up. It still wants its own separate individual existence, its own decisions and enjoyments. Therefore it may feel waves of resentment or actual hostility to 'That'. Or it may feign submission while actually striving to acquire and contain 'That'. "I sought to devour Thee; come now and devour me; then there will be peace, Arunachala!"³ That is why (except in the rarest of cases, such as that of Ramana Maharshi) the quest is not a single simple achievement. Normally 'this' clings to its separate individual life with one hand while reaching out for the vast universal life with the other. And the two cannot co-exist. 'This' must surrender utterly to 'That' and consent to be devoured before it can merge in the peace of Identity. And it fights against it persistently and cunningly, constantly changing its ground and weapons and tactics, when dislodged from one fortress slipping round the rear of the attacker and setting up another.

Hence the uneven course that the quest takes. It is never a gradual, smooth ascent. It always goes in alternate waves of grace and deprivation, expansion and contraction, a phase when life is a lilt of beauty followed by one of harsh aridity when all that was achieved seems to have been lost and all grace withdrawn. That is because 'this', turning in love and humility to 'That' draws upon itself the grace which is uninterruptedly radiating from 'That', like light from the sun; then it filches the grace for its own use or aggrandisement. Whether in thought or deed, it grows proud, considers the grace its own and thus interposes its own dark shadow before the luminosity of 'That', causing an eclipse and shutting off the flow of grace. Again and again it repeats this, learning only very gradually and by bitter experience; and it is only when, in final desperation, it brings itself to complete surrender that at last peace comes. Then 'That' becomes 'This'. There is no other.

² *Forty Verses on Reality*: V. 5.

³ *The Marital Garland of Letters*: 28 (b).

THE MAHARSHI'S PLACE IN HISTORY

A New Development in Hinduism

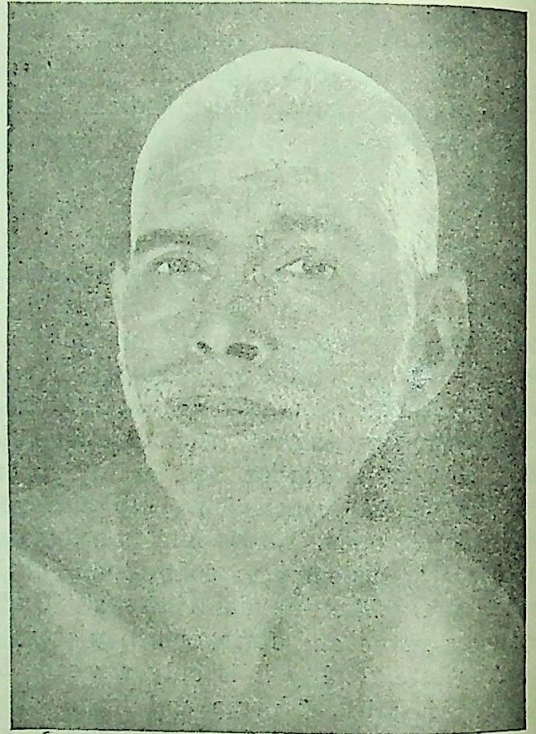
By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

A NEW development has come about in Hinduism since the time of Ramakrishna. Because, ancient as it is, Hinduism is still capable of development. That means that it is still living, for development is the quality of life, rigidity of death. It is surprising how little this development has been noticed; it just seems to be taken for granted. It is of fundamental importance.

In order to appreciate it one must see clearly what Hinduism is. It is a fusion between an organization of life and worship on what might be called the horizontal plane and paths to Beatitude on the vertical. Of course, not every Hindu takes a path to beatitude — he can still be a Hindu without that. But he cannot be without the horizontal affiliation, that is to say without either being integrated into the Hindu social system or having renounced it, like a sannyasin. And this horizontal modality of Hinduism is so complex that it would be hard for an outsider to fit into it even if he tried. As for his becoming a sannyasin, that would mean adopting the Hindu pattern of life in order to renounce it, which seems rather absurd.

For this reason, Hinduism is not and cannot be a proselytising religion. It is also not an intolerant religion. For those who do follow a path to Beatitude there are a number to choose from, and, for instance, one whose path is through the worship of Rama will not condemn or try to convert another whose path is through the worship of Krishna. Why should not this apply also to one whose path is through the worship of Christ?

What has been happening since the time of Ramakrishna is that the path to Beatitude is being separated from the social organiza-



tion of life, so that people from outside the Hindu community can receive spiritual guidance from its gurus without needing to integrate themselves into that community. This is a change of tremendous importance, since it enables the spiritual influence to radiate out beyond the limits of the organization. For any one who is interested in drawing historical parallels, it is not unlike the change which St. Paul brought about when, revolting against the orthodoxy of St. Peter and St. James, he decided that those who came to Christ from outside Judaism need not accept the Jewish law and ritual. However, the parallel cannot be pushed too far. The circumstances were different, since what then began as a new path to Beatitude for those who were seeking soon developed into a religion for a whole community with

its own law and ritual and its own social organization.

What is similar is that, now as then, a materialistic world has broken away from religion and many are looking around desperately for guidance. People are giving up religion and, even for those who seek, the paths to Beatitude are becoming lost or inaccessible for the guidance is no longer reliable. Divine Providence always meets the needs of its children, but not always in the same way. In the time of St. Paul it did so through the establishment of a new religion; to-day it does by making spiritual guidance available outside the formal structure of the religions. This is happening in various ways; in the resurgence of non-denominational Christian mysticism through inspired teachers such as Joel Goldsmith, in the spread of Buddhism in the West, not as a creed for the many but as a path for the few, and in this new development in Hinduism, making the path to Beatitude available outside the structure of Hindu orthodoxy.

The proof that this new development in Hinduism is a valid and not a heretical one is that it has been brought about from above, by the Masters themselves, beginning with Ramakrishna and culminating in Ramana Maharshi.

It was Vivekananda who was the most spectacular in introducing this new trend with the Vedanta Societies he founded in the West; but it was not his innovation. Ramakrishna was not mistaken in saying that Vivekananda would complete his work. That work has two aspects; to restore Hinduism to vigour and self-respect in India and to make it known as a spiritual current in the West, a current available to Western seekers. Both were carried to completion by Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna himself had no foreign disciples, but he dreamed once that he was in a Western town of large, modern buildings, surrounded by Westerners, and he interpreted it to mean that he would have many disciples in the West. After his Mahasamadhi, his wife, Sarada Devi, whom all the disciples revered as the Holy Mother, quite

naturally and without argument initiated foreign disciples, even though she spoke only Bengali, which they did not know. All the other disciples approved of this and of Vivekananda's more spectacular action in the West and followed in the same direction.

Since then this has become the regular practice with Hindu Gurus. All or almost all of them accept foreign disciples without expecting them to integrate themselves into the Hindu social system or practise Hindu religious ritual.

This practice culminated in Ramana Maharshi. There was something mysterious about the initiation he gave—no laying on of hands, no mantra, no outer form at all; only the mouna diksha, the silent initiation. Although silent, this was a definite event, not a gradual process. He himself confirmed this in various oblique ways when necessary, asserting that, from the point of view of the disciple, the Guru-disciple relationship is a necessity and explaining that a spiritual practice (and he was constantly enjoining one) only has potency for those who are initiated into it. For those who experienced his initiation no conformation was necessary. If they were in his presence it was given through a penetrating look of terrific power; if at a distance perhaps through a dream or vision, perhaps formlessly. In any case, the disciple felt taken up, swept forward on a wave of power, thenceforward guided and supported. And in any case there was nothing specifically Hindu about it, nothing to make it available to members of one community only and inaccessible to others.

That was one advantage of the silent initiation. Now that he is no longer in the body we see another also—that it can still continue, whereas formal initiation could not. He himself indicated in various ways before leaving the body that his guidance would continue; for instance, when some devotees complained that he was leaving them without guidance and asked what they were to do without him, he replied: "You attach too much importance to the body." The implication was obvious; the body was going, he was not. And indeed, he said

"They say that I am going, but where would I go? I am here." Not "I shall be" but "I am". The body could go, but the formless Self, with which he was in constant conscious identity, just is, eternally, here and now.

This continued initiation and guidance is not just theory; it happens. I will quote a case of it described quite recently in a letter from a man in a Yorkshire village of whom we had no previous knowledge, published in the January 1967 issue of *'The Mountain Path'*.

"On August 13th (1966), without any shadow of doubt, Sri Bhagavan bestowed his Grace on me. Instruction was also implicit in his Grace. And further, even though I could not admit it to myself at once (although I knew it to be so) it was initiation and an indication that a Guru-disciple relationship had been created."¹

This formless initiation and guidance of Bhagavan, spreading invisibly through many countries, has not been institutionalized. This also is in conformity with the needs of the age, when many who respond to it would not be in a position to join an institution and many also would not wish to be dependent on one. It is supported outwardly by the books on or by the Maharshi and by *'The Mountain Path'*, and in some towns the followers of the Maharshi meet together in a society where they can meditate and discuss and listen to talks. This is a great facility where it exists, but it has nothing of the formality or compulsion of an institution; and there are many for whom even membership of such a society is not available. Many also, by temperament, do not desire it. We see now the wisdom of Bhagavan in establishing a path which can be followed in solitude and silence, without singing or chanting, without the knowledge of any sacred language, independent of the forms and ritual of any religion.

PATH AND DOCTRINE

A spiritual path rests on a doctrinal basis, just as a scientific experiment does on a

theoretical basis. To make them universally available, outside the ritual of any religion, the paths the Maharshi taught were simple and direct; and therefore the doctrine on which they were based was universal and free from philosophical technicalities. I say 'paths' because in fact there were two. He would often say: "Ask yourself 'who am I?' or submit". As simple as that and he declared that these two paths both lead to the same goal.

The one that he offered first was always Self-enquiry. Only if some one complained that he found this too difficult or that it did not suit his temperament did he tell him in that case to submit, assuring him that submission would lead to the same goal. Let us therefore start with a consideration of Self-enquiry and the doctrinal basis he provided for it.

THE PATH OF ENQUIRY

Self-enquiry is not analysis; it has nothing in common with philosophy or psychology. The Maharshi showed this when he declared that no answer the mind gives can be right. (And, indeed, in this it resembles a Zen koan). If it had a mental answer it would be a philosophical conundrum, not a spiritual practice; and it was as a spiritual practice that the Maharshi prescribed it. So any one who tells you what the answer to the enquiry is shows by that very fact that he has not understood it. It does not mean arguing or saying that I am not this or not that; it means concentrating on the pure sense of being, the pure I-am-ness of me. And this, one discovers, is the same as pure consciousness, pure, formless awareness.

So far is it from being a mental practice that the Maharshi told us not to concentrate on the head while doing it but on the heart. By this he did not mean the physical heart at the left side of the chest but the spiritual heart at the right. This is not a physical organ and also not a yogic or tantric chakra; but it is the centre of our sense of being. The Maharshi told us so and those who have

¹ *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1967, p. 85.

followed his instructions in meditation have found it to be so. The ancient Hebrews knew of it: "The wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left,"² it says in the Bible. It is referred to also in that ancient Advaitic scripture, the *Yoga Vasishtha* in verses which the Maharshi quoted as Nos. 22-27 in his *Supplementary Forty Verses on Reality*. Concentration on the heart does not mean thinking about the heart but being aware in and with the heart. After a little practice it sets up a current of awareness that can actually be felt physically though far more than physical. At first this is felt in the heart, sometimes in the heart and head and connecting them. Later it pervades and transcends the body. Perhaps it could be said that this current of awareness is the 'answer' to the question 'Who am I?', since it is the wordless experience of I-ness.

There should be regular times for this 'meditation', since the mind accustoms itself and responds more readily. I have put the word 'meditation' in inverted commas, since it is not meditation in the usual sense of the word but only concentration on Self or on being. As Bhagavan explained: "Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object."³ Good times are first thing when you wake up in the morning and last thing before going to sleep at night. At first a good deal of time and effort may be needed before the current of awareness is felt; later it begins to arise more and more easily. It also begins to occur spontaneously during the day, when one is not meditating. That explains Bhagavan's saying that one should keep up the enquiry constantly, not only during meditation. It comes to be more and more constant and, when lost or forgotten, to need less and less re-awakening.

A man has three modes of manifestation; being, thinking and doing. Being is the most fundamental of the three, because he can't think or do unless he first is. But it is so covered over by the other two that it is seldom experienced. It could be compared

to the cinema screen which is the support for the pictures without which they could not be seen, but which is so covered over with them that it is not ordinarily noticed. Only very occasionally for a brief glimpse, does the spiritually untrained person experience the sheer fact of being; and when he does he recalls it afterwards as having been a moment of pure happiness, pure acceptance, pure rightness. Self-enquiry is the direct approach to conscious being, and therefore it is necessary to suspend thinking and doing while practising it. It may lead to a state when conscious (instead of the previous unconscious) being underlies thinking and doing; but at first they would interrupt it, so they have to be held off.

This is the path; the doctrine on which it is based is Advaita, non-duality, which might be rendered 'Identity' or 'No-otherness'. Its scripture for the Maharshi's followers is his *'Forty Verses on Reality'* together with the *'Supplementary Forty Verses'* which he later added.

In this he declares: "All religions postulate the three fundamentals; the world, the individual and God."⁴

Not all in a formal way, for there are also nontheistic religions; but essentially this is what we start from. Whether I am educated or uneducated, my own existence is the basis from which I start, the direct awareness to which everything else is added. Then, outside myself, my mind and senses report a world of chairs and tables and trees and sky, and other people in it. Mystics tell me that all this is illusion, and nowadays nuclear scientists agree with them. They say that the red book I am holding is just a cluster of electrons whirling about at high speed, that its redness is just the way my optic apparatus interprets a vibration of a certain wave-length, and similarly with its other qualities; but anyway, that is how it

² *Ecclesiastes*, X, 2.

³ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, (pub. Sri Ramanasramam), Ch. V.

⁴ *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 2 (from the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, published by Sri Ramanasramam).

presents itself to my perception. I also have a feeling of some vastness, some power, some changeless Reality behind the vulnerability of the individual and the mutability of the world. It is about this third factor that people disagree, some holding that it is the real Self of the individual, others that it is a Being quite other than him, and others again that it does not exist at all.

The verse continues: "But it is only the One Reality that manifests as these three." This implies that Self-enquiry is the quest of the one Reality underlying the apparent trinity of individual, world and God.

But the mistake inherent in dualism does not consist in supposing that God is a separate Being from you but in supposing that you are a separate being from God. It is not belief in God that is wrong but belief in the ego. Therefore the verse continues: "One can say, 'The three are really three only so long as the ego lasts.'" Then the verse turns to the practical conclusion, as Bhagavan always did in his teaching: "Therefore to abide in one's own Being, where the 'I' or ego is dead is the perfect State."

And that is what one is trying to do by Self-enquiry; to abide as the Self, the pure Being that one essentially is, casting aside the illusory reality of the ego.

Feeling one's insignificance before that mighty Power, one may worship It in one of Its manifestations — as Krishna, say, or Christ or Rama, but: "Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality, it is only a means for realizing It without name and form."⁵ That means appreciating Its Infinity, realizing that It alone is, and leaves no room for a separate me subsisting apart from It. Therefore the verse continues: "That alone is true Realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It."

And this is done by Self-enquiry. "If the first person, I, exists, then the second and third persons, you and he, also exist. By

enquiring into the nature of the I, the I perishes. With it, 'you' and 'he' also perish."⁶ However, that does not mean blank annihilation; it only means annihilation of the illusion of separate identity, that is to say of the ego, which is the source of all suffering and frustration. Therefore the verse continues: "The resultant state, which shines as Absolute Being, is one's own natural state, the Self."⁷

Not only is this not a gloomy or dismal state or anything to be afraid of, but it is the most radiant happiness, the most perfect bliss. "For him who is immersed in the bliss of Self-realization arising from the extinction of the ego what more is there to achieve? He does not see anything as being other than the Self. Who can apprehend his State?"⁸

Note that in speaking of the unutterable bliss of Self-realization Bhagavan says that it is achieved through the extinction of the ego, that is the apparent individual identity. So that, although nothing is lost, something does have to be offered in sacrifice; and while being offered it appears a terrible loss, the supreme loss, one's very life; only after it has been sacrificed does one discover that it was nothing and that all has been gained, not lost. This means that understanding alone cannot constitute the path. Whatever path may be followed, in whatever religion, the battle must be fought and the sacrifice made. Without that a man can go on all his life proclaiming that there is no ego and yet remain as much a slave to the ego as ever. Although the *Forty Verses on Reality* are a scripture of the Path of Knowledge, Bhagavan asks in them: "If, since you are a single being, you cannot see yourself, how can you see God?"⁹ And he goes on to answer: "Only by being devoured by Him."

This brings the path of enquiry to the same point as the path of surrender, since in either case the ego must be sacrificed. It is a very profound verse. It recalls the Hebrew

⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, v. 21.

saying : "No man can see God and live." Many people see visions of God in one form or another, but that is not seeing God. The mind and senses of a man knot themselves together into what wrongly supposes itself to be an individual entity separate from the Universal Being which it aspires to see. But that Universal Being is the true Self of it. Only by surrendering their illusory individual entity to be devoured out of existence can the mind and senses become true instruments for perception by what is thereafter understood to be their true Self, so that, as the Maharshi sometimes said, the only way to see God is to be God.

THE PATH OF SURRENDER

There are many who are drawn rather to a path of love, devotion and surrender than to one of inner quest, that is of Self-enquiry. For them too the Maharshi reduced his teaching to the simplest essential when he said : "There are two ways ; ask yourself 'Who am I ?' or submit." No matter whether the ego submits to God with form or without form or whether in the form taught by one religion or another, so long as it utterly and completely submits. But what can induce it to submit ? Not the hope of any heavenly reward, because that would be bargaining, not submission. Only love can evoke submission ; therefore the path of surrender is also the path of love.

For people who take this path also Bhagavan composed a scriptural basis for it ; in this case *The Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala*, that is the first of the *Five Hymns to Arunachala*.

Before speaking of this path, however, let us anticipate an objection. That is that philosophers have written countless books and articles, and still do, maintaining that God is either the very Self of you or totally other than you, each side denouncing the other and declaring it at fault. How then can a Master regard it as a mere matter of temperament which one believes ? How can he offer a choice to his followers ? Ought he not to state definitely that one is right and the other wrong ?

Actually, the reason for disagreement is only that the two declarations are inadequately worded. Is Supreme Being the very Self of me or totally other than me ? We obviously cannot answer that until we know who or what is the 'me' about whom the question is asked. The very Self of whom ? Other than whom ? So once again we are driven back to Self-enquiry. I feel myself to be an individual entity with likes and dislikes, abilities and disabilities, before a vast Presence, an illimitable Potency, which I can only dimly apprehend. Can that presence be the same as Me ? It is certainly not the same as this individual entity ; but is this individual entity the reality of me ? It was not here before birth ; it will not be here after death ; it has grown and evolved and will decay and disintegrate. The mistake, then, as I said in speaking of verse 2 of the *Forty Verses*, is not in supposing there to be a God separate from me but in supposing there to be a me separate from God.

There are only two things to do : one is to sacrifice this apparent individual entity (as Bhagavan declared even in speaking of the Path of Knowledge when he said that it must be devoured by God) ; the other is to find out what is the reality of me. The answer is not a form of words but an experience. It is better to have it than to describe it. The individual yearns for its own destruction in Union with the Universal. Bhagavan says in the *Garland* : "Unite with me to destroy Thee and me and bless me with ever-vibrant joy, Arunachala !" ¹⁰ The destruction of separate selves is the gateway to ever-vibrant joy. The whole tone of the two scriptures is different. Where the *Forty Verses* were hard as granite and sharp as steel, the *Garland* is one of the great mystical love poems of all time. Never have I read anything so moving and compelling, even in translation.

Death is promised, but at the same time resurrection : "Hast thou not bartered Thyself for me ? Oh, Thou art death to me, Arunachala !" ¹¹ But it is I who am the

¹⁰ *Marital Garland of Letters*, v. 56. (from the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, v. 62.

gainer by the exchange : "Thou art the Primal Being while I count not in this or the other world. What didst Thou gain then by my worthless self, Oh, Arunachala ?" ¹² The loss of individual entity is the gain of Divine identity : "The moment Thou didst welcome me, didst enter into me and grant me Thy divine life, I lost my individuality, Oh Arunachala !" ¹³

Thus the two paths come to the same goal. The difference is rather of emphasis. In the Path of Knowledge initiative is rather with the seeker : "To seek and abide in the Reality that is always attained is the only Attainment." ¹⁴ In the Path of Surrender the burden of initiative is thrown on the Lord, though even so some effort must be made : "Weak though my effort was, by Thy Grace I gained the Self, Oh Arunachala !" ¹⁵ In the same sense, Bhagavan has said (and it remains true now as in his lifetime) : "Submit to me and I will strike down the mind." Probing into the Truth behind one's apparent individual entity and sacrificing that apparent entity in love to God both lead to the illimitable bliss of Pure Being. Theorising about the outcome leads nowhere.

And what, it might be asked, of the other two paths, yoga marga and karma marga, did Bhagavan not teach them also ? It is of the very essence of this new development of Hinduism that ritual and technique are simplified to the utmost to make it available to those also who are not Hindus or who, being Hindus, are more or less cut off from the traditional forms of Hinduism. It would have been incongruous, therefore, if Bhagavan who brought this development to its completion, had given instruction in a highly technical approach such as yoga. Indeed,

he specifically says in *Self-enquiry* : "As there are elaborate treatises on the elements of ashtanga yoga, only as much as is necessary is written here. Any one who desires to know more must resort to a practising yogi and learn from him in detail." ¹⁶

Karma marga, on the other hand, in the sense of disinterested, harmonious action, free from self-interest, doing what is right simply because it is right, regardless of praise or blame, profit or loss as Sri Krishna taught Arjuna in the Gita, is particularly suited to modern times ; and both the paths that Bhagavan taught, Jnana and Bhakti, were to be combined with karma marga. It is possible to follow either of them as a recluse shut off from the world, but that was not Bhagavan's teaching. Time and again some one would ask his authorisation to renounce the world, but he did not give it. He always taught that the battle was to be fought in the life of the world, in the midst of family and professional life. "If you renounce it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home ? So why change the environment ? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever the environment." ¹⁷

¹² *Ibid.*, v. 93.

¹³ *Ibid.*, v. 95.

¹⁴ *Forty Verses*, v. 35.

¹⁵ *Marital Garland*, v. 45.

¹⁶ *Self Enquiry*, p. 25.

¹⁷ *Maharshi's Gospel*, Vol. 1, p. 6.

Brahman is supreme. He is the reality — the one without a second. He is pure consciousness, free from any taint. He is tranquillity itself. He has neither beginning nor end. He does not change. He is joy forever.

— Sankara.

ZEN AND THE VICHARA

By
G. J. YORKE

ZEN Buddhists believe that some 2,500 years ago prince Gautama left home at the age of 29 to become a digambara, a wandering naked ascetic. After six years during which he mastered many of the techniques of yoga, he decided that yogic ascetism and the trance states or samadhis to which it leads were not the whole answer. So he left his guru, decided to wear clothes once more and, if possible, to eat at least once a day. When he had recovered his health he sat down under a tree and vowed that he would not leave its shade until he was enlightened.

I like to think that he sat under that tree reviewing his life and all that he had been taught and had experienced. That he then entered within himself and passed through the various trance states or samadhis, starting with those with form and then refining them into the formless and inexpressible, until he entered what the Chinese call the Samadhi of Sameness or Universality. In it he was still unenlightened. In Zen idiom he was sitting on top of a pole from which he had still to step down to extend the hand of compassion to all sentient beings.

He came out of the samadhi, opened his eyes and saw the Morning Star. Suddenly he was the Buddha, the Enlightened One. He was what he had always been, but at last he was aware of it.

Some six months later he began to turn the wheel of the Dharma by giving his first sermon or discourse. He was back in the world once more. As a Chinese Zen Master put it, the wind in the trees became his sermon of liberation.

It is said that one day, instead of giving a sermon, he held up a flower and his senior disciple Mahakashyapa smiled. Enlightenment was and is as simple and as difficult as

that. It is simple because the immediate cause is something like opening one's eyes and seeing a star, some 'turning' word, gesture or look of one's teacher, or dropping a cup and hearing it smash. At the same time it is appallingly difficult because it is the climax of many lives devoted to spiritual struggle and the discipline of dhyana.

If the Zen allegory is true, the Buddha's gesture of holding up a flower instead of preaching a sermon was the first recorded instance in Buddhism of the Transmission of Mind. There was a sealing of mind and heart by mind and heart. On that level there was no doctrine to teach, but a mutual experience was shared and acknowledged. For both men the common acts of daily life had become ultimate wisdom.

Ramana Maharshi put it like this: "to those who have realized the Self, as well as to those who have not, the world is real. But to the unenlightened, Truth is adapted to the form of the world, whereas to the enlightened Truth shines as the formless perfection and the substratum of the world."

Zen puts it in simpler language. About 900 years ago two Chinese Zen masters met for the first time and one asked the other three questions to see whether he was enlightened. The replies show that he was. The dialogue runs:

- Q. What is the world?
- A. Just so.
- Q. Who are you?
- A. What! What!
- Q. How do you receive visitors?
- A. We have a cup of tea.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was like those two Zen masters. The English novelist, Somerset Maugham, once visited Tiruvanna-

malai to get background for his novel *The Razor's Edge*. But on arrival at the Ramanashram he had a slight heart attack brought on by the heat. As he was resting in a small room, Bhagavan entered and sat on a chair near the bed. Half an hour passed and then Somerest Maugham stuttered: 'Oughtn't I to say something?' Bhagavan replied: "No, silence is best." Similar revealing anecdotes are told of Sai Baba and Ramakrishna.

Zen scriptures of the ninth Century say that the Buddha before his death officially established the Dhyana School, which is now called Zen, by giving his robe to Mahakashyapa. The great Kashyapa in due course tested Ananda when the latter asked: 'What did the Buddha transmit in addition to the robe?' Mahakashyapa replied by calling out: 'Ananda!' Ananda said: 'Yes' and suddenly was enlightened. Mahakashyapa acknowledged the enlightenment by saying: 'Pull down the flag-pole', by which he meant that no more sermons were necessary.

Each Patriarch or Head of the Dhyana School is said to have transmitted the light to his successor in a similar direct way until about 1,000 years later Bodhidharma, who was a Tamil, became the 28th Patriarch and took the Transmission to China. There it was called Ch'an, which is the Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit word 'dhyana'. The Dhyana School, however, has left no discernible traces in India, so that Chinese and Western scholars argue that it was a Chinese invention. It may have been, but if so it does not matter, for the allegory, if such it be, was devised by a master.

In China the Transmission and possibly the Robe were passed down through five historical Chinese Patriarchs who are counted as six by the inclusion of the Indian Bodhidharma. Then the Transmission but not the Robe passed from Ch'an master to master until the present day.

Some three years ago Ch'an master Hsu Yun died at the ripe age of 119 as a result

of being beaten up by a Communist gang. His deathbed gatha for his successor ran thus:

'Taking pity upon ants, the shrimp jumps not into the water'

In other words out of compassion for the communist ants, the Ch'an master had not escaped to Hongkong or Taiwan and his successor carries on secretly in China today.

In the 12th century a Japanese monk took the Transmission to Japan where it was called Zen. There too it has been passed down from Roshi to Roshi until the present day.

When in 526 A.D. Bodhidharma reached China and was asked by the Emperor what he taught, he replied:

A special Transmission outside the Scriptures,
Without dependence upon words and letters,
Directly pointing to the mind and heart
of man,

Seeing into one's own true nature and
becoming a Buddha.

Now the Transmission is outside the Scriptures because seeing into one's real nature, finding out who or what one is, is a personal experience. It is a result of doing, not of telling, studying or listening to lectures. This experience is called kensho or satori in Japanese. But to discuss kensho or satori only leads people astray, for they then theorise about it.

The Maharshi used to say: "Preoccupation with theory, doctrine and philosophy can be harmful as it interferes with the really important work of spiritual effort by offering an easier alternative which is merely mental".

Zen puts it thus: flowers are red and willows are green, but kensho or satori — that is to say seeing into the Self-nature — is a flower in the sky, a ghost in thin air. When you talk about it or seek it, it cannot be found.

'Without dependence upon words and letters' means that no amount of learning

will help you to realize who you are or your own true nature. The Guru is within, yet you and I need a human guru to help us find that Guru within.

Since there is no dependence upon words and letters, Zen roshis although they know and quote from the Buddhist Scriptures rarely use the technical terms of Buddhist philosophy. They talk, as Ramana Maharshi did, in simple everyday language. Thus Zen keeps fluid and alive as each roshi coins his own words and analogies to express the inexpressible and relate it to this world.

When asked about the nature of the Buddha, he may talk about something in the room, of a mother-in-law leading a bride on a donkey, of three pounds of flax, or even of a piece of paper. Intuitively he hits upon the very analogy, piece of nonsense or even apparent blasphemy which can burst the logical bonds of the questioner's habitual mode of thought or belief. For it is one's pattern of thought which is so often a barrier to one's spiritual understanding.

And so in Zen the Dharmakaya is called by 1,000 names and analogies such as the Buddha-nature, the essence of mind, the true man of no position, a tree in the courtyard, a round cake that happens to be on the table at the time, this or that.

Then, since words are inadequate to express the inexpressible, gestures are used in their place. Chu-chi for instance would often answer questions by raising a finger, Lin-chi would give a loud bellow or roar, while Yeng-shen would just draw a circle in the air — and so on in infinite variety.

In most books on Zen the third line of Bodhidharma's gatha is mistranslated 'direct pointing to the mind'. But the Chinese word translated *mind* primarily means *heart*. If you are centred only in the mind, you depend upon name and form (nama-rupa). But to see into your real nature you have to turn inwards into your heart, which does not mean your physical heart or the anahata chakra. As the Maharshi used to say: "A man does not have to

go and find where his eyes are in order to see. The heart is there, always open to you if you care to enter it, always supporting your movements, although you may be unaware of it. It is, perhaps, more correct to say that the Self is the heart. Really the Self is everywhere aware of itself as the Heart or Self-awareness."

In other words to see into your Self you have to meditate in the heart. But no one can tell you where that Heart is or what the Self-nature is like.

As for 'Seeing into one's own true nature and becoming Buddha' Bhagavan put it like this: 'The mind turned outwards results in thoughts. Turned inward it becomes the Self.' The simplest way in which you and I can get a feel of what this means is to take the darshan of a Christian, Buddhist or Hindu saint — of someone like the late Ramakrishna, Sai Baba, Ramdas or Ramana Maharshi. Of the gurus available today I suggest Shri Ananda Mayi Ma.

The saints, roshis or gurus are simple people who live an active life in the world and yet can sit quietly over a cup of tea. They see mountains as mountains and you and me as we are. They weep with those who mourn and laugh with those who make merry. But they are few and far between while their imitators are legion.

Then what should you and I do if we aspire to bodhi (Enlightenment), or moksha (Liberation)? Should we burn our books and our boats, fly to Japan and sweat in the discipline of Zen meditation under a roshi: or give up everything to sit at the feet of someone like Ananda Mayi Ma? One or two of us may be ready to do so, if we have worried enough over the books and find ourselves in the treadmill of dogma, debate and speculation so that we know we are getting nowhere. If our frustration has given rise to a red-hot iron ball of doubt which only the discipline of Zen or the Vichara can melt and disperse, then perhaps we are ready to go. But you are not ready if you have merely caught a touch of the general feeling of unease which is growing in the world today,

for this is not enough to justify throwing up everything to sit under a Zen roshi or a Hindu guru. Nor should one use it as an excuse to dive unaided straight out of one's depth into the sea of meditation. To do so without a guru at one's elbow is to ask for trouble.

Some people argue, quoting Ramana Maharshi as their authority, that the Guru within is sufficient. And so it is, but only for a really spiritual person who is on the threshold of liberation. Remember that I and most of us are not always able to distinguish between the subtle insinuations of the ego and the enlightened promptings of the Guru within. So it is best to be humble and consult a human guru until he merges with the inner Guru.

Now the Buddhist aim is to experience the Great Tranquillity, Enlightenment or Liberation for the sake of all sentient beings. Ramana Maharshi put it like this :

Between the Self of Pure Consciousness and the physical body there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or I-notion, a hybrid that is neither of them. This flourishes as an individual being. This ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it has to be destroyed by all possible means. Then that which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-realization.'

This has to be done now, down here in Samsara and not in some future and temporary heaven. But it cannot be experienced until one has given up all that one has and thinks that one is, and this not all are prepared to do. The I-thought is always, if not there, at least only just beneath the surface.

What then has Zen or the Vichara to offer you and me ? The answer is that level of spontaneity, tranquillity and awareness to which each one of us, can attain while continuing to live in the world with our present commitments. Its depth will depend upon how far we succeed through meditation in

stilling our desires and suppressing our egos so that we realize in part who we really are.

The meditational disciplines of Zen and the Vichara are designed to free us from name and form (nama-rupa), from our tendencies (vasanas), thoughts and emotions, so that suddenly the light of our Buddha-nature, that is of our Self, breaks through. In Zen jargon one sees one's original face.

Each one of us is an iceberg at the mercy of wind and wave in the ocean of samsara. The vast submerged mass of that iceberg represents the alaya-vijnana, the reservoir of our potentialities for good and evil of which we are still almost completely unaware. The water in that iceberg has been frozen into a mis-shapen mass by our prarabda karma : by our heredity, environment and upbringing ; by our habitual thoughts and emotions : and by the fact that for each one of us the world is still centred round the individual that bears our name. We are still ice-bound. We do not flow freely or live without constraint. Whether we know it or not, we are each shut in a private world of our own imagining. Mountains to us are what we imagine them to be, not what they are. To be free and enlightened, to see oneself and this wonderful world as they really are, one has first to melt that iceberg with the fires of compassion, faith and meditation.

I am now going to say something of what you do and what you should not do when sitting in Zen meditation. But I can only touch on the subject as the variations in the methods taught by different roshis or gurus and in the personal needs of each disciple are endless. So I shall only recommend what appeals to me personally, thus painting a one-sided and personal picture.

First let me say what you should not do in Zen giving the reasons in almost direct quotation from what Ramana Maharshi said in reply to questions.

There is no need to induce the manifestation of any given form of shakti through pranayama or any other method, because the

Self — or Buddha-nature — became all these shaktis.

You do not have to awaken Kundalini deliberately or to explore the chakras, each of which has its own kind of power or knowledge, because the Self-nature or essence of mind supports them all.

You do not try to enter any heaven or any given samadhi, for they too are supported by the Self. If you do so by chance it is an experience for which you are ready and you work through it. If you stay in it, you will never rise above that level and so will remain unenlightened.

You do not visualise your ishta-devata in order to worship at his feet, for seeing God is only being the Self.

You do all you can NOT to enter Sunyata, the void, for the mind finds a void whenever it ceases to see and experience : but that is not the real you. You are the constant illumination that lights up both experiences and the void.

"It is unnecessary to meditate on Tat Tvam Asi, since you are now eternally That. Why should you be for ever thinking : 'I am That' . Does a man have to go on thinking 'I am a man' ? Are we not always That ? ". It is the same with 'Aham Brahmasmi' . Brahman does not say so. What need is there for him to say it ? The real I always abides in Brahman. All you have to do is to find out who you are.

Now for what one does. Bhagavan once put it like this :

"The Bliss of the Self can only manifest in a mind made subtle and steady through assiduous meditation. He who experiences that Bliss is liberated even while still alive".

It may be helpful to master a meditational asana, but remember that the Maharshi said : 'asana really means steadfastness in the Self and is inward.'

In Zen one may have to master a theme, which in fact is not a mental one. Mastery here means that you have to dwell on that theme as continuously as possible. And that

is all there is to zazen. The vichara is not a theme but turning inward.

In Soto Zen one's first theme, which is not a mental one, is a variant of satipatthana as developed and taught by the Buddha. You just watch and observe your whole breathing process. To start with you feel the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils : then you follow it into and out of your body. That is all. You do not try to stop thoughts rising, but when they do you try not to follow them. The moment you follow a train of thought, a feeling or an emotion, you are caught by it and are no longer watching your breath.

In the process you discover various things : Your own natural breath rhythm : an awareness first of your physical and then of your subtle body, of your thoughts, feelings and emotions. In other words without deliberately trying to do so, you explore the kosas until you find that the vijñāna-maya kosa is only the sheath of the I and not the I itself.

You do all this naturally without forcing anything and, after a time, without theorising about it, if a samadhi swallows you treat it in the same way as an asuric revolt against the whole process of zazen — but with this difference, you cannot help enjoying it. You learn a little more from each experience and then 'walk on'.

From just sitting and watching the breath — which is not easy when the breathing dies down to something so nearly imperceptible that you lose it — you go on to what is called shikhanata in Soto Zen. Here you no longer bother about the breath : you just sit motionless trying to be acutely aware. Slowly you begin to appreciate what awareness is. As with the taste of a mango none can tell you what it is like, you have to experience it for yourself.

Ramana Maharshi said : "The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. But when the ego overloads it, it functions as reasoning or perceiving. The universal mind, not being limited by the ego, has nothing outside itself and is therefore only aware."

One must remember, however, not to get stuck in the awareness of any given state, for on this level it is only another experience, whereas enlightenment is an all-inclusive state of being.

The technical term for this type of awareness—or silent illumination—is *samatha* and its main danger is that you just sit vacantly in a happy haze, becoming a pool of stagnant water, a stone maiden or a piece of dead wood. Long ago a young student, full of the illusions that beset us all, used to sit locked in meditation every available minute. His roshi, after observing him for some time, approached him one day and asked: "What are you doing?". "I want to become a Buddha", replied the young monk. The roshi without a word picked up a brick that happened to be there and began rubbing it. "What are you doing, master?" asked the astonished pupil. "I am making a mirror" said the old man. "But, master, no amount of rubbing will make a mirror out of that brick." "And no amount of sitting will make a Buddha out of a clod", was the master's curt retort, with which he ended his lesson for the day.

Sooner or later in Soto Zen one's roshi will take one off this *samatha*-type meditation which was designed by the Buddha to awaken awareness, for it by-passes the reasoning mind. But one still has to work on the mind before one can discover its source. And so he gives one an iron ball upon which to chew.

In Rinzai, as in Soto Zen, the basic attitude is taken for granted, but in Rinzai one is guided through the early stages of sitting by the head monk: one does not come directly under the roshi until one is ready for koan meditation. When one is ready, the roshi will give one of the three following Dharmakaya koans.

The first is: a monk asked Master Joshu: "Has the dog Buddha-nature or not?" Joshu answered: "Mu". (Mu means No).

The second is: Hakuin Zenji used to say to his disciples: "Listen to the sound of one hand clapping."

The third is: The Sixth Patriarch asked the head monk Myo: "Thinking neither of good nor of evil, at this very moment, what was your original face before your father and mother were born?"

In China, Hongkong, Taiwan and Vietnam the koan "Who am I?", namely the *Vichara*, is used at this stage. But if the meditator has been accustomed to repeating the mantra of Amitabha Buddha he will be given the variant "Who is repeating the Buddha's name?" I understand that this variant is also given by Obaku Zen roshis in Japan today. Strictly speaking there is no answer to a koan, but one has to arrive at a reply which shows that one has seen into it. This reply is not necessarily a logical answer and may not even be verbal, but it holds water absolutely to any one else who has also seen into it. And so you should see your roshi as regularly as possible to show him your latest attitude or reaction to your koan. You should also attend as many as possible of the seven or eight special weeks devoted exclusively to koan meditation at his Sodo during the year.

The replies that one gives to the roshi are reflections of what Buddhists call one's state or degree of ignorance, or, as we say in the West, one's psychological attitude. The roshi's 'No' to all one's answers undermines this attitude and drives one further back or down into oneself. How the student reacts to this is individual to him. Whether he does or does not become aware of his idiosyncracies, of all that he thinks and feels, that he is, also depends upon him. The roshi will repeatedly tell him to have a spring cleaning, but whether he takes this to refer to his room, house, garden or heart, all of them or none, literally or metaphorically, also depends on him.

If we were all the same a clear answer could be given as to what it means to look into a koan or the *Vichara*. But all our surface waves are different, so that there is no single answer. The 'original face' is not mine, but my approach to it is peculiar to me and is conditioned by my private set of

delusions. If I want to find out what a thing feels or tastes like, I must try to do it for myself, whether it is drinking iced water or looking into a koan.

What you should do is simple — go on working at your theme, koan or the vichara, as constantly as you can. Walk on. In the words of the Maharshi: "It (the theme) will become constant when the mind is strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind and such a mind can hold on to the theme. Then . . . the theme will remain uninterrupted, no matter what you are doing". And he added: "To be the Self that you really are is the only way to realize the Bliss that is yours."

One cannot pass one's first or Dharmakaya koan until one has entered or experienced for a timeless moment what Miura Roshi called the undifferentiated realm of the Dharmakaya. Hakuin Zenji said this of it: "When activity of mind is exhausted and your capacity for feeling has come to a dead end, if something should take place not unlike a cat springing upon a mouse, or the mother hen hatching her eggs, then in a flash great livingness springs up. This is the moment when the phoenix escapes from the golden nest, when the crane breaks the bars of its cage." The goose has left the bottle.

If however you think that such a glimpse into your true nature is enough you become a mere worm living in the mud of self-accredited enlightenment. All you have done is to pass what is called the barrier of the Patriarchs and your real training has only begun. You have not done more than entering the stream. To attain enlightenment in Rinzai Zen you have to look into and pass through another four series of koans.

After deepening your insight into the undifferentiated realm of the Dharmakaya by seeing into more Dharmakaya koans you have to come back down to earth so as to experience the marvellous realm of differentiation. This is done by concentrated reflection over and over again on the koans that

deal with differentiation. You are resharpening your sword of discrimination.

The second series which you tackle is concerned with the study and investigation of words. Before you can teach Zen or understand its Scriptures, you have to penetrate directly into words and understand them thoroughly. The Lankavatara Sutra says of this: "To penetrate into the Fundamental Principle and not to penetrate into the teachings on it is like opening your eyes in the dark. To penetrate into both the Fundamental Principle and the teachings on it is like opening your eyes into the clear light of day".

As Miura Roshi put it: "To illumine one's mind with old learning during the day and to deepen one's discernment of the principle by meditation in the Monks' Hall at night, this is indeed to illumine the teachings with one's own nature. Inside and outside are one, this and that are transcended. It is like two mirrors mutually reflecting one another with no shadow between them".

Next there is a series of koans about which I know nothing except that they are called Nanto, which means 'difficult to pass through'. And there is a last series through which you experience what is called 'the reciprocal interpenetration between the apparent and the Real'. They deal with what is called in Zen jargon the host and guest positions. Finally some roshis then return you to the koan that you were given at first some ten or more years ago.

The full course of training takes some ten or fifteen years of fairly constant work under your roshi before you are authorised to train others in the koan discipline. Then you have to 'mature your compassionate heart'. Having realized that Zen is 'freedom, actuality, action and daily life, you have to live it. If, however, you fail to attract disciples or, having attracted them, you fail to pass on the Transmission to at least one of them, so that you fail of an heir, you will learn that after all you have failed to realize your intrinsic enlightenment.

ABOUT SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

By
Dr. (Miss) BITHIKA MUKERJI

JUNE 1966. Satsang Hall of the Sri Anandamayi Ashram in Kishenpur, Dehradun. Kirtan is just over. It is the time for conversation with Mataji.¹ The hall is quite crowded with the inmates of the Ashram, guests from outside who have come to spend some time with Mataji, and visitors from the town. An old gentleman who is occupying a front seat asks permission to put a question to Mataji. She smilingly nods assent.

"What have you achieved by your *sādhana*?" he asks.

"Here, the question of achievement or *sādhana* does not arise. I am what I have always been."

The gentleman consults a paper and then says:

"What is your message to the world?"

"What message can one give who has not achieved or learnt anything?"

The gentleman does not share the general appreciation of this prompt rejoinder. He is in earnest.

"Ma, I have travelled a long distance to see you. When I go back, my friends will ask: 'What is she like? What did she say?' and then what am I to tell them? I want to understand your message!"

"Very well, tell them: 'I have a small daughter; she prattles of whatever occurs to her.' You said, 'When others ask', therefore I said: 'I am your child,' but actually you and I are one, aren't we? There is only one all-pervading *Ātmā*, naught else except the ONE. You yourself are a barrier unto yourself in the form of *samskāras*. The destiny of every human being is to destroy the veil that hides his own Self. To realize the Self means to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's Self."

"There are good as well as bad *samskāras*. Do good *samskāras* also act as barriers?"



The Mataji

"The bad-ones do not allow the good-ones to be effective. However, from the ultimate point of view there is no such thing as good and evil."

The gentleman professes himself pleased and satisfied with this answer.

He no doubt would have been extremely surprised to hear Mataji on other occasions advocate the ritualistic worship of deities. She also countenances forms of worship which relegate ritualism to a bare minimum. It cannot be said that Mataji has any religion, doctrine or method of her own because she accepts and approves of all of them. She would in effect say: "How can you impose limitations on the Infinite by declaring: 'This is the only true way'?"

¹ Sri Anandamayi Ma is generally known as 'Ma' or 'Mataji.'

"Why should there be so many different religions and sects? Because through every one of them He gives Himself to Himself, so that each person may advance according to his individual uniqueness . . ."²

Mataji's teachings are mainly for the individual and as such it would be as futile to enumerate her words of guidance as to pin point the radiating flashes of a diamond. To each questioning person she generally replies according to his cultural background, his capacity to understand and also the degree of his conviction. However, some generalizations may be attempted without fear of misrepresentation.

Mataji has been guiding people away from the ways which lead to religious frenzy or extreme rigorisms. Mataji never delivers a talk. Neither does she herself perform any ritual whatever. She usually encourages the singing 'of *Nāma Kirtana* and sometimes takes active part in it. Mataji is easily able to establish rapport between herself and people of all countries, age groups and coming from various walks of life.

Now that she is quite well known, many foreign seekers after Truth, artists, journalists and tourists visiting India make it a point to meet her. Mataji receives them as she receives thousands of others. The writer of this article, as one of the interpreters, has had numerous opportunities to watch Mataji with foreigners. She gives them the same individual treatment as to persons well known to her. To superficial questions her answers consist of two or three words and the interview is terminated before it has well begun. To a few she gives detailed instructions about many things.

In a particular case the interpreter had a strong feeling that the translation was superfluous. Mataji hardly waited for it to be over before she would start speaking again. The man, looking at her face, would nod understandingly, as if the meaning, which was already clear to him, was being confirmed by the translator. Indeed, many foreigners have experienced no difficulty in communicating with Mataji although she speaks only Bengali and Hindi.

The variety of the advice she gives would explain to a large extent the difference of opinion amongst her devotees about Mataji's teachings. Some will claim that she upholds orthodoxy: "She told me not to eat food cooked by a non-brahmin." Another will say: "Mataji never believed in the caste system. Did she not have the temple doors in the Ashram at Dacca opened for all, many years before such a movement started elsewhere in India?"

We may hear such contradictory statements as: "She believes in education. She has asked me to study hard and finish my educational career before I think of doing anything else," and: "Education is not important. She told me: 'This education will help you to earn material wealth only. You must strive for spiritual wealth'." Or: "Mataji so strongly advises against the breaking up of a home: it is no use arguing that my difficulties can be solved only by going away. She always exhorts me to have patience and forgive again and again." And: "She has told me that no duty is binding for one who goes forth in quest of God."

Some will assert that she upholds the ideal of social service, others that she advocates renunciation of the world for the sake of God, and each person will be correct.

It must be understood that all these teachings are the variations of just one theme: The supreme duty of every human being is to strive for the realization of THAT WHICH IS. She knows no compromise in this. All other obligations, namely towards family, country, humanity have their places in the hierarchy of human values but they are all subsumed under the supreme duty towards God: "To aspire for the realization of Truth is alone worthy of man." "It is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone — for His service and for the realization of Him."³

² Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma. (Published in 1961 by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi.)

³ Quoted from *Matri Vani*, a collection of Mataji's replies to letters.

But it cannot be said that Mataji recommends renunciation of the world. To the oft repeated question : "Should I renounce the world because this would be helpful to a life of *sādhana*," she has variously replied : "The time has not come for you to do so since the question arises in your mind whether you should or not."

"The call of the Divine must be felt as a compulsion. A man who hears this call leaves all behind even as a dry leaf falls from its branch."

"If renunciation does not purge one clean of every sense of duty and obligation, it is merely a flight into another world."

"A man does not debate whether he should escape from a holocaust."

Mataji generally maintains that so long as duties are meaningful they should be carried out meticulously and as a service to God.

She repeats this again and again to statesmen, businessmen, intellectuals, ignorant, rich, poor, old and young. "The Ashram of the householder is a field of service and every service should be performed as a worship of God."

"Abide by your duty. To live in the home that he has created for himself is surely fitting for a householder. Do not, however, neglect the search for your real Home. Only when this has been found has one truly come home".⁴

"There are various modes of living : one is the Ashram of the householder ; another to do service, regarding whomever one serves as a manifestation of the Supreme Being ; a third way is to fix Self-realization as the one and only goal and advance towards it with uninterrupted speed and determination. In keeping with his inclinations and bent of mind everyone chooses one of these modes of living. God Himself will take care of everything that concerns a man who puts his whole trust in Him."

To children Mataji sometimes says something like this : "You are my friends, aren't you ? Will you do something for this friend of yours ? (1) As soon as you wake up in the morning bow down to God and

pray to Him to make you a good boy or girl. Say : 'Lord, I don't know where you are. Grant that I may find you.' At night, do *pranāma* again and if you have done anything wrong, ask God to let you do better the next day. (2) Try to obey your parents and elders. (3) Study well. (4) Always speak the truth. (5) Laugh and play, run and jump to your heart's content and if you can do the first four things you may be naughty and mischievous as well."

To a busy housewife she said : "You have no time during the day but the nights are your own. It does not matter when or how you remember God. Divine Grace is all-pervasive. Everyone should constantly endeavour to be in readiness to receive this ever-present Grace."

A religious life does not mean a life of idleness. What is required is to live constantly in the presence of God. Nobody need neglect any duty to practise *sādhana*. Admittedly, there are conditions that are not conducive to a religious atmosphere. But Mataji's counsel in general would be to make the best of the existing circumstances. It is only she who can devise ways and means out of seemingly unsurmountable difficulties.

Mataji is rather strict about the quality and purity of food for persons engaged in spiritual discipline. The general rules of orthodoxy are maintained in her ashrams because this seems a desirable arrangement for all concerned. She sometimes says : "You have come here for the purpose of serious *sādhana*. Everyone lives within an aura of his own creation. The commingling of natures is not conducive to progress on this path." Such advice is for the inmates of the ashrams and for other serious minded devotees. She does not seek to change the customs ordinarily followed by people.

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Mataji was born in 1896 in the village of Kheora, now in East Pakistan. Her parents, devout Brahmins, named her Nirmala Sundari.

⁴ Matri Vani.

By all accounts she was an extremely obedient, helpful and radiantly happy child. Her mother does not recall that Nirmala Sundari ever expressed a wish of her own. From her infancy she exercised unusual attraction on all who met her. For a short time only she was a pupil of the local village school. She was ever ready to help with the chores, not only at home but at all the neighbouring houses. Mataji has always approved of physical work. She herself, was untiringly engaged in household work till the years 1923-24. She was able even to combine the life of a hard-working housewife with that of the ascetic engaged in rigorous sādhanā.

Before completing her thirteenth year, Mataji was married to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, known as 'Bholanath'. In accordance with village customs, she stayed with her husband's family for the first few years after marriage. When she was about 18 years old, she went to keep house for Bholanath at his place of employment.

The question of leading a conventional married life just did not arise for this unusual couple. Mataji has said: "My parents told me that I should respect and obey Bholanath and look upon him as my guardian. Consequently I gave him the respect and obedience due to my father. He was always like a father to me." Bholanath, by all accounts, was a remarkable man himself. When the time came for them to stay together, the young husband found that he had a most extraordinary wife to look after. She was gentle, hard-working and of a joyous nature, but without a trace of worldly feelings and desires. Her innocence and unquestioning trust in him made him the devoted guardian he was to her throughout his life. Mataji has a delightful sense of humour. The anecdotes of her life with her relatives by marriage and also with Bholanath are full of penetrating observations. About her marriage, Mataji has once said: "In the beginning Bholanath used to say: 'You are very immature and childlike. . . . It will be all right when you grow up . . .', but it seems I never grew up!" More seriously: "Bholanath's restraint and sense

of dignity were always exemplary. All the years I was with him I did not even have an inkling of the desires which assail mankind. It is now that I hear unending tales of troubles and transgressions."

Mataji was never taught any spiritual practices, neither did she engage in them in the accepted sense of the term. However, during the years she spent in Bajitpur and Dacca (roughly from 1918-1926), she spontaneously went not only through the variegated sādhanas indicated in the Hindu Scriptures but also those of other faiths. The effects of these practices manifested on her body. She would be in exalted states of *bhāva* or *samādhi* or her body would assume various yogic postures. She had no previous knowledge of such matters. She watched herself go through the innumerable paths of sādhanā as she watched herself performing household work. She refers to this period as "The play of sādhanā." She has said . . . "As a rule there is a veil that separates man from his own Self. This veil has to be worn off by practising sādhanā. But here, there was no veil. It was drawn only in order to be removed again. Therefore, what else should this be called but play?" What she has related about this phase of her life would fill a volume, yet she says that she has not disclosed even one hundredth part of the entire experience. The minutest details of each line of approach were revealed to her in their true significance.

Mataji did not need or ask for publicity. In fact, she tried her best to avoid it. In the beginning a few of Bholanath's friends would come and talk to her about religious topics. All knowledge of rituals, spiritual exercises and also philosophical evaluations of such matters came unhesitatingly, clearly and convincingly from this untutored village maiden. These friends brought others and gradually crowds began to assemble round Mataji's radiant personality, seeking advice on spiritual things as well as on their own problems.

Mataji herself did not go out of her way to talk to anyone. If Bholanath asked her

to speak to people she would do so, not otherwise. Throughout his lifetime Mataji never did anything without his consent. Bholanath occupied a peculiar position. He looked upon Mataji as his guru and spiritual preceptor and also received from her the untiring service of which she alone is capable. After his death in 1938 at the age of 56, other devotees have tried to serve Mataji and make all arrangements for her.

* * *

It is difficult, indeed impossible, to understand Mataji because her actions and words reveal nothing about her. Usually action gives a clue to the mental make-up of a human being. Mataji's actions arise out of the needs of the people around her. For herself no action whatever is necessary. Even bodily requirements such as food, rest, sleep and so forth do not influence her behaviour and may remain suspended for any length of time. During earlier days this was a more frequent phenomenon. Once she did not eat or even drink water for 13 days. On the 14th day, she broke this remarkable spell of abstinence with the remark: "I just wanted to see how it would be to remain without water. I find that even the need for water is becoming extinct. But for the comfort and convenience of people a semblance of normal behaviour must be kept up."

Other similar features make it impossible for ordinary judgement to be meaningful in her case. To the question: "If you have no mission to fulfil or message to give, why do you tell us to worship God?", Mataji replied: "If you do not ask, I have nothing to say. But if you ask and if it is my mood then I shall certainly tell you about the better way of life."

Mataji herself has had no Guru and she does not give formal initiation to anyone. The hundreds of people flocking round her are not bound to her even by this intangible tie. The secret of her attraction she sometimes explains in this way: "It is natural for people's hearts to go out to a child. My body is aged but actually I am a small child and as such receive affection from all.

Although this little girl cannot do anything for anybody, people out of the goodness of their hearts love her nevertheless." Or alternatively: "All children and unmarried people are my friends, and married people are my fathers and mothers and so I am dear to all. Is it not natural to love one's friend and child?"

Mataji has no chosen attendants. Her companions, travels, places of residence are fortuitous. One is as good as the other. One of Mataji's favourite expressions, repeated by her again and again, is: "*jo ho jay*: Whatever comes to pass is equally welcome". Nobody can presume to say that he or she is indispensable to Mataji or specially favoured by her. Out of the throng that surrounds her, there may be one or two who understand the immeasurability of the personality that gives of herself freely and unstintingly to all who have need of her and yet remains so remote. Her compassion for suffering humanity is unbounded. Her days are more than full with assuaging the sorrows of the bereft, unlucky and afflicted. Mataji has no mission to fulfil in the world because no lack in her requires fulfilment. This self-sufficiency makes her personality absolutely enigmatic. From this point of view her closest companion of over 40 years' standing is as distantly placed as the stranger at the fringe of the crowd. She passes through the multitudes mostly as an on-looker. She has no fault to find with anything or anybody but if approached in perplexity she will give guidance and hope and advice as only she can.

All those who have seen Mataji will however subscribe to one general opinion about her: In Mataji's proximity there is no room for pessimism, despair or depression. The divine presence seems to permeate the atmosphere. The razor's edge path appears easy to traverse. The heart is buoyed on a wave of joyousness unimaginable before. It seems a miracle to be born a human being to whom the Kingdom of Heaven has been promised. Mataji's mere presence awakens in every man, woman and child a sense of destiny which is ANANDA.

THAYUMANAVAR, A TAMIL POET-SAINT

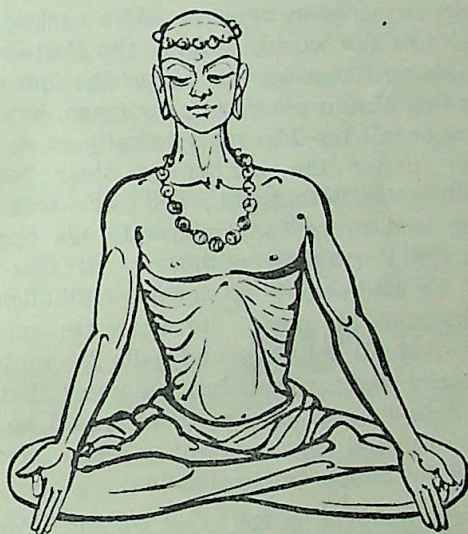
By
T. KRISHNAJI

THE lives of mystics and poets the world over is a revelation of Divine Grace. Sometimes this takes tangible form; sometimes not. Lord Krishna bestowed Grace on his devotee Sakku Bai, a woman mystic of Maharashtra, by assuming her appearance and doing her housekeeping for her when she was away on a pilgrimage. Lord Siva, out of love and grace, attended as a midwife on a Vaisya girl when her mother, who was to have done so, was unavoidably absent. On account of this, he is known as Thayumanavar in Tamil, Matrubbhuteswara in Sanskrit, meaning 'He who became the mother'. Under this name he is the God worshipped at the Rock Fort at Tiruchirappalli. Following the Hindu custom of naming a child after a God, a Vellala of Vedaranyam, who was a high officer under the Nayak king of Madura, named his second son 'Thayumanavar'. The child was to become famous both as poet and saint.

We are told that he early entered the service of the king and, after the latter's demise, while still an adolescent, left the court to avoid the amorous advances of the widowed queen. Thereafter he wandered as a sadhu in quest of God and Guru. At the above-mentioned temple at Tiruchirappalli he met Mouna Guru Arulananda Sivachari, a great saint of the Saiva Siddhanta School. He asked to be taken as a disciple, but the saint answered '*chumma iru*', meaning 'be still' or 'be quiet' or 'just be' (a phrase which Ramana Maharshi also used on a number of occasions when some one came to him in a restless state of mind). However, he added that when the time was ripe he would initiate him.

Thayumanavar then returned to family life. He was taken back to Vedaranyam by his brother and there he was married and had a son named Kanakasabhai. Soon after

the child's birth his wife died and he again left home in quest of God. The Mouna Gurū met him, as he had promised, and gave him initiation into sannyas, from which there is no return to family life.



Thayumanavar

He followed the discipline of silence (*mouna*), which he describes as: "that state which spontaneously manifests after the annihilation of the ego." He says: "It is a state beyond light and darkness, but it is called light, since language is inadequate to express it. The ego disappears and 'I' spontaneously manifests in full glory." Ramana Maharshi particularly singled out this verse of his for admiration.

True spiritual silence is not easy. Thayumanavar invokes the Grace of God to hold to it: "O Eternal! only to remain in Silence devoid of thought and speech is my ambition by day and night." This inner silence is beyond disputes and dialogues between the sects. Aldous Huxley quotes the Spanish mystic Molinos (1640-1697), who paid with his life for his silent mysticism,

as distinguishing three degrees of silence : silence of the mouth, silence of the mind and silence of the will : to refrain from idle talk is hard ; to quieten the gibbering mind is harder still ; hardest of all is to still the voice of desire and aversion in the will.¹ St. Antony, one of the Desert Fathers of early Christianity, says that : "He who sits quiet hath escaped from three wars, hearing, speaking, seeing."²

Strangely enough, despite his general withdrawal into silence, Thayumanavar could on occasion take an active part in the affairs of the world. Seeing the Portuguese occupying Rameswaram, one of the four outstanding Hindu places of pilgrimage, he called upon all the Maravars to rally to its defence under the banner of their leader Raghunatha Sethupathi ; and such was the force that arose in response to his appeal that the Portuguese withdrew. It was not that he had anything against Catholicism. Throughout his poetry he expresses appreciation of all religions and calls for mutual tolerance and respect, but he knew that if it fell to the Portuguese there would be no tolerance and this ancient pilgrim centre would be closed to the Hindus.

Thayumanavar is the most popular Tamil poet-saint. His mystical and devotional lyrics continue to inspire people. Their profundity of meaning is matched by their beauty of form, so that they appeal to simple and learned alike. Declaring that all paths culminate in a realization of the same truth, he extols Vedanta and Siddhanta alike. He is the great prophet of *samarasa*. He equates Maya with avidya or ignorance, saying : "What is Maya but my ignorance ?" Although proclaiming Advaita or Identity, he does not decry Dwaita or Duality but declares : "Dwaita leads to the light of Advaita." He worships God both as Personal and Impersonal. Lamenting intolerance, he declares : "The cause of innumerable disputes between lands and religions is that each claims rightful sovereignty for its own God."

In the completeness of his worship, he declares with the Kenopanishad : "With-

out Him no atom could move." What, then, of human intelligence or ignorance ? Or of human will ? He answers unequivocally : "Without Thee there is nothing." In some of his poems he uses also the language of bridal mysticism.

Often he retired to the forest or public gardens and remained for days absorbed in the bliss of the Self. Tradition has it that he was sitting thus, immobile in samadhi, in a public garden in Ramnad when the gardeners, not noticing him, piled a dump of dry leaves and twigs about him and set fire to it, and thus his body was consumed and he merged in the Godhood.

Although he lived only about two hundred and fifty years ago, we have no precise knowledge of the date of his birth and Mahasamadhi. There is no tradition of any miracles that he worked ; his poems were his miracles. He was supremely great alike as a saint and a poet. Ramana Maharshi often referred to him and quoted from him. The following is a prose translation of seven consecutive verses that he selected from him and that Sri Ramanasramam has printed as a leaflet.

1. *The individual self known as 'I' having arisen and caused trouble to all, universal Maya, the diversifying agent, spontaneously follows it. Who could ever describe the vast ocean of misery due to it ? It appears as the flesh, the body, the outer and inner sense, the all-pervading ether, air, fire, water and earth, as mountain and forest, as huge visions like hills, physical and subtle, as forgetfulness and memory. Thus rising up, it beats upon a man, wave after wave, bringing pleasure and pain born of his past actions, bringing also their remedies known as creeds and religions. It brings God and the seeker after God and the testimony found in learning and logic ; and all these things are more numerous than the grains of sand on the sea-shore.*

¹ The Perennial Philosophy, p. 225.

² The Desert Fathers by Helen Waddell, p. 67.

2. Unaccountable troubles spring up spontaneously, sheaf upon sheaf. How can one destroy them all at one blow, like burning up a hill of camphor in one great blaze, leaving no residue of ash? ³ To accomplish this miracle and grant me enlightenment, Grace took on a form in every respect like my own, eating and sleeping, suffering and enjoying, bearing a name and having a human birth, It appeared as the Silent Guru, like a deer used to decoy a deer.
3. It claimed my body, possessions and very life. Eliminating the unreal, It taught: "You are not the five senses, nor the five elements, nor the limbs, nor the mind, nor their attributes, nor all these collectively, nor the body, nor knowledge, nor ignorance. You are pure consciousness, separate from its background, like a crystal, but revealing it to those who look. And I am only indwelling Nature revealing the truth to you on finding you ripe for it.
4. "If you wish to reach the Being-Consciousness-Bliss at the heart of all, which is also the inner abode of healing Grace, listen to what I tell you. May you attain the pure Heart and abide there for ever! May dense ignorance vanish for you! May you attain to Bliss-Consciousness!" Speaking thus,
5. The Guru bestowed true knowledge of that unique Silence which destroys all bondage, wherein there is no meditation, no ego, no space or time, no direction or association, no elimination of error or differentiation, no expression, no parting of night and day, no beginning, middle or end, nor any aggregate of these.
6. Yet, though all these are excluded, is it not void but Natural, Eternal Being, inexpressible in words, not manifesting as ego, but the Reality engulfing all, having swallowed up ignorance as day does night and absorbed all knowledge. Transmuting the seeker into Itself, It shines in Silence, Self-effulgent.
7. By Its emergence It prevents any other from appearing; all else is suddenly extinguished like burning camphor,³ leaving no ash or glow. Alone It shines, beyond the senses and apart from knower-knowledge-known. It is, but who can speak of It, and to whom? For when It arises the individual is transmuted into It. It speaks Itself.

And finally, to give some slight indication of the lyric beauty, this translation by Prof. K. R. R. Sastry already published in *The Mountain Path* of October 1964:

I cannot worship at Thy shrine
Or to Thy holy symbols bow;
I cannot pluck the flowers for offerings,
When in each flower's heart art Thou.
How can I press my palms together,
My body bent to worship Thee,
How my imperfect service offer,
When Thou indweldest, Lord, in me?
Thou art the vastness of the Void,
The elements, the primal sound,
The Vedas and the quest they bring,
The Goal beyond all seeking found.
Thou art the quest and Thou the finding,
Thou of all seeing art the Sight,
Of knowing, Thou alone the knowledge,
Of mind and eye the inner Light,
The outer word and inner Meaning,
The vocal and the silent Call.
Oh Source of Grace in joy past thinking,
Lone cosmic Dancer in high Wisdom's hall!

³ Camphor is burnt as a symbol of the aspirant burning up the ego, because it leaves no residue of ash.

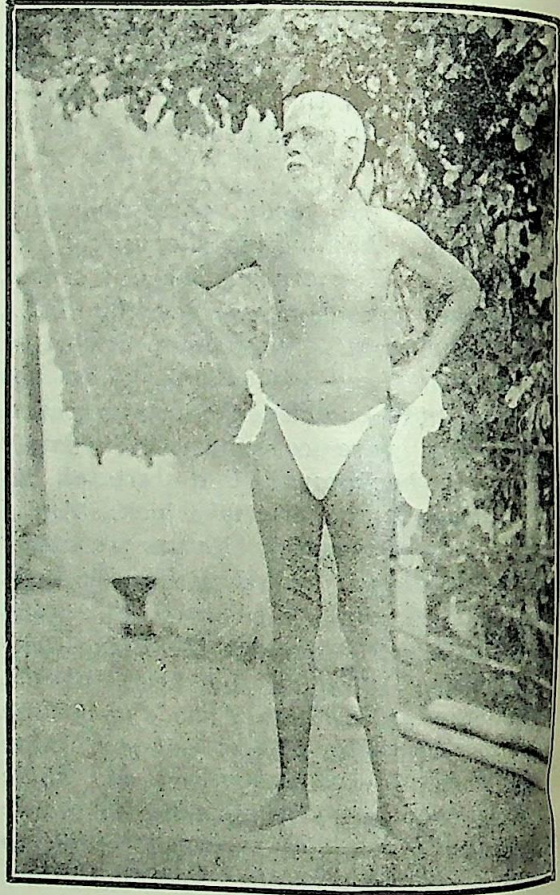
The secret meaning of the Vedas is truth; of truth, self-control; of self-control, freedom from all limitations! This is the sum of all the scriptures.

— *The Mahabharata*,

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
Dr. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

I WAS studying medicine and my final examination was a few months ahead. Together with a few friends I set out on an excursion to Vellore. I carried my camera with me and took pictures of the old Fort and some stone carvings of archaeological interest at Vellore. There was not much to see there, and some one suggested that the temple at Tiruvannamalai was a huge and impressive work of art. So we got in a bus for Tiruvannamalai and went round the temple, admiring the beautiful stone carvings and the huge towers. I had a good harvest of photographs. A by-stander suggested that we pay a visit to the Maharshi who was living a couple of miles away. So we set out for the Ashram in a horse cart. I was wondering if the Maharshi would be a good subject for photography. It was evening by the time we arrived at the Ashram. The visitors had dispersed from the hall. The Maharshi had gone out, as was his habit, for a short walk on the hill. We waited for a few minutes and saw a string of people following a tall man walking with a stick and holding a *kamandel* (vessel for water). We alerted ourselves and I asked if I could take a few photographs of the Maharshi. The reply was 'No, no, you cannot.'



The first photo by me.

As we were talking, the tall stately figure had approached us and asked what was the matter. Mr. Seshu Iyer, the man I had asked for permission, pointed to me and my colleagues and said, 'This party are from Madras and they want to take some pictures of Bhagavan.' 'Oh! Is that so?', said the Maharshi. 'Let them.' So saying he stood posing for me with his hands on his hips and with his face in semi-profile. I lost no time. I opened my camera, brought it into focus and clicked 3 or 4 times, giving different apertures and different timings. I was not looking for any spiritual fare and I was not

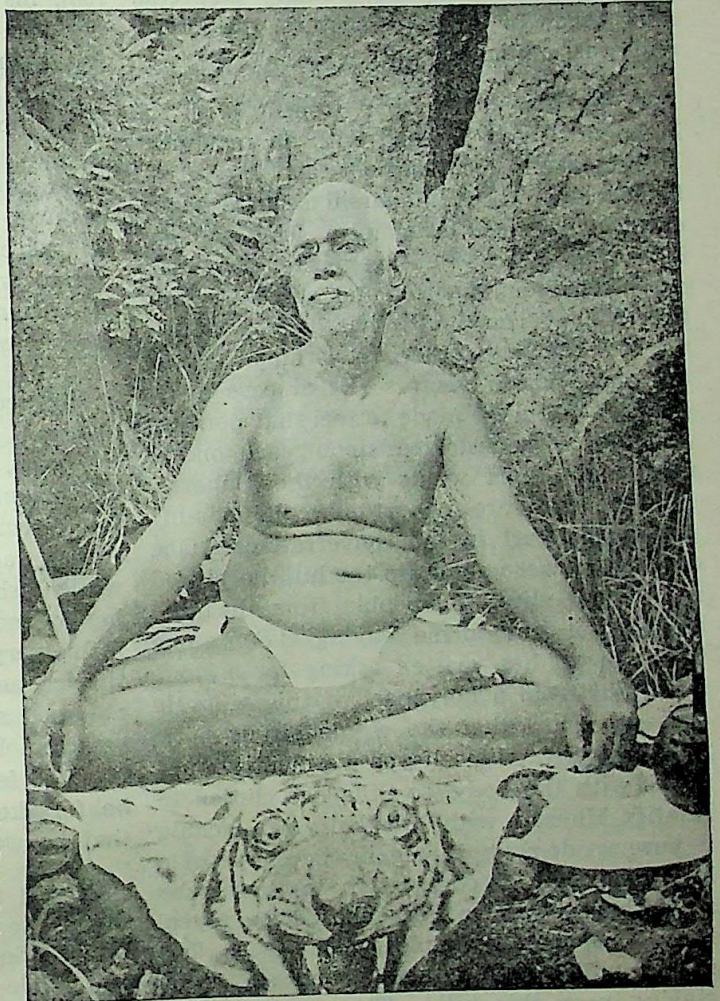
conscious of any holy atmosphere. Bhagavan, as they called him, entered the hall and lowered himself on to the sofa which was carefully arranged for him. He pulled out a towel and wiped his wet feet and then he sat recumbent on the sofa, seeming quite relaxed. It was surprising how he merged into himself totally oblivious of the surroundings. We entered the hall and sat a few feet off in front of him. The Maharshi did not seem to take notice of anything around him. He wore a calm and distant look. His eyes were shining and there was something divine about his countenance.

The hall was badly lighted for photography but still I took a few pictures of the Maharshi. We then got up and mechanically prostrated before him and left the hall; before we were out of the Ashram compound, a Sanyasi clad in orange robes came running after us and said, 'Please send a few prints to us to the Ashram address. We do not have any good picture of Bhagavan.' This person was none other than Sri Niranjanananda Swami, the then Sarvadhikari. I left the Ashram without giving any further thought to the matter and never suspected that it was to play a vital part in my life. I returned to Madras, developed the films and sent a few prints to the Ashram.

Then I settled down to my studies. I had almost forgotten Tiruvannamalai. One morning I received a letter inviting me to come and take a group photo with the Maharshi, as all the devotees were impressed with the good picture that I had made. I wondered if this could not be put off till my examinations were over. But somehow I found myself entrained for Tiruvannamalai. When I entered the Maharshi's presence, he greeted me with a smile and said: 'They want a group photo and they want you to take it for them.' I felt highly flattered and I felt that I had done right in answering their call. To have been the object of Maharshi's remark, was exquisitely pleasing. I felt quite important, arranged the group, erected my camera and took a few pictures. Then Bhagavan posed for me in the conventional Padmasana. The Ashram has sold many thousand copies of this particular pose of Bhagavan. Bhagavan sat almost statue-like, with a clean shaven head.

On another occasion, as I entered the hall, the Maharshi remarked, 'Just now we were

talking about you and see the coincidence, you are here in person. You may yourself receive the letter personally which they have addressed ready for posting to you.' Whenever I went to the Ashram, though I usually stayed there only for one brief day,



Padmasan pose, also taken by me.

from morning till evening, I made it a point to accompany the Maharshi and take as many pictures of him as possible.¹ I used to wonder if such doggedness on my part would not vex the Maharshi. I have snapped him walking, sitting, eating, cleaning his feet, I have snapped him smiling; bursting into

¹ Most of the photographs of the Maharshi that are available and published in our books, were taken by Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami.

laughter ; smiling at a child ; in a meditative mood ; in samadhi etc. Once he was going up the hill when there was a slight drizzle and he was offered a country-made palmyra umbrella. I took a picture of him while he was using this. I also took another picture of him using an ordinary umbrella. As I began to take this picture, the Maharshi was smiling broadly.

In the few hours that I spent with the Maharshi, I felt charged with an inexplicable peace and contentment and I returned home elated. The Maharshi seemed someone whom I knew intimately. I felt at home in his presence and even expected some sort of paternal indulgence and affection from him. I have no doubt that he did indulge me like a loving father. It is amazing how the thousands of visitors felt at ease in his presence and were made to feel that personal attention was bestowed upon each one of them. My short walks with the Maharshi gave me the rare opportunity of listening and taking part in the conversations. One day, as we were going up the hill, he picked up a small glistening pebble from the path and held it out to me saying, 'Some one from abroad has written asking for a stone taken out from a holy part of this hill. He does not know that the whole hill is holy. The hill is Siva Himself ; as we identify ourselves with the body, so Siva has chosen to identify Himself with this Hill. Arunachala is pure wisdom appearing in the shape of a hill. It is out of compassion to those who seek Siva, that Siva has chosen to reveal himself as a hill visible to the eye. The seeker will obtain guidance and solace by staying near this hill.' These words sank into my heart. It never occurred to me to weigh or examine the aptness of what was said. The hill was holy. The Maharshi had said it and that was what counted with me.

Sometimes I used to wonder if it was not ridiculous of me to pay so much attention to photography whereas his teaching was 'I am not the body.' Was I not chasing the shadow and even trying to perpetuate it? Somehow so long as I was seeing the Maharshi, his teaching did not assume any importance to me. His person was seen and felt by me and I felt drawn and attracted to him. It gave me immense pleasure to take pictures of him. He was more important to me than his teaching — every little movement, every one of his acts and gestures, was highly valued by me and they always carried some divine fragrance. Simply to watch him, no matter what he was doing, was highly gratifying. I was attracted to him like a baby to its mother.

His death gave me a severe jolt. I was shocked. Had I missed the opportunity of a life-time, to imbibe the teaching of the Enlightened One? I had done nothing in the direction of spiritual sadhana. Had I wasted all my time taking photographs, while I should have engaged myself in trying to understand and practise his teachings in his very presence. 'No', I said to myself, this cannot be true. I was sure that I had obtained some grace from the Maharshi. He was somehow still here. Only, we have to learn to feel his Presence. We would never be forsaken for he had himself assured us that he was not going away.

Then I turned with a sad heart to studying his teachings. I began to see light in them. Some of the sentences touched me and made me feel that I was in his presence, listening to him. I took heart ; the more I read, the more intimate the Maharshi became to me. His teaching pulsed with life ; I began to understand it and it mixed with my being and became my own !

Divine is he who has overcome both good and evil.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam.*

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY AS SEEN BY A HINDU SWAMI

By

SWAMI NIRMALANANDA

IF anyone were to put me the question who has had a great influence on my life, I would unhesitatingly name the personality of Jesus Christ. If He were to come again in our midst in flesh and blood, I would not only worship Him with my whole-hearted adoration, but would wash His feet with tears of devotion. It was that immortal book, *The Imitation of Christ*, which in my view, would rank equal to the Bible, that made me to appreciate the wonder and glory of Christ. Many years ago in my early twenties I had a unique vision of Jesus Christ. Since then many a time He has come to me in His cosmic form and I have rejoiced to live in communion with Him, for Christ is the living Truth that makes men free.

In quest of the historical Jesus, to imbibe the spirit of His wonderful personality, I have wandered in every nook and corner of the Holy Land which remains sanctified by His physical presence. While walking along the shores of the Lake of Galilee, at Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, in the Garden of Gethsemane and along the Via Dolorosa (The Way of the Cross) leading to the Holy Sepulchre, my mind was so much moved with historical reminiscences that I felt that the great drama of His life was being reenacted in front of my very eyes.

It has been truly said that our sweetest songs are those that sing of the saddest thoughts of life. In fact, the tragic ending of the life of Jesus was a triumph of Truth. Only in death can we find a new life. Without crucifixion there can be no resurrection. Despite His selfless love, spotless purity and noble teachings Jesus had to suffer by the hand of men, their insult, torture and tormentation. Yet His boundless love for all, His unlimited forgiveness even to those

who crucified Him, His true humility and perfect obedience serve as a model for all mankind. All the troubles of the world are of our own making. Even today the wicked make the innocent suffer without realizing that an insult to one is an affront to all. However much we may deny our part, we all are equally responsible for all the evils and injustice found in the world. Christ came as an example to all of us so that we might turn from our evil ways and live as a fine example to all others. He lived, suffered and died on the Cross in vain, if we do not turn to His way of love, purity and perfection.

Christ is the centre of our being and He knocks at the door of our heart calling us to His way of love, peace and freedom so that we all may live as He lived, pray as He prayed and love as He loved. Human life has its many problems which entail sufferings. How true is the saying of Jesus: "In this world ye shall have tribulations." To many these wearisome burdens of life are often so heavy that they feel altogether crushed and almost lost in the misery of life. Christ is the beckoning hope of all such dejected, despised and despaired souls. "Come unto me all those who are weary and troubled, I shall give you rest." "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "I am the light of the world and he who believeth in me shall not walk in darkness." "Let your heart not be troubled. Be of good cheer. I am with you always." There could be no greater assurance nor mere comforting words of hope and consolation. As Jesus Himself has made it clear, "it is the sick that needs the physician." He did not come to call those who profess to be righteous, but the erring and struggling souls to a noble and happy life of peace and perfection.

As we all do, Jesus too lived on two planes of existence: in terrestrial as well as celestial kingdoms. Because of mounting miseries and the multifarious problems of this earthly life, we all prefer to live in heaven experiencing the undisturbed peace and happiness in God. Yet the fact remains that we all are forced to come down to earth in order to satisfy our physical needs: for our working, eating and sleeping. As smoke is contained in the fire, all worldly undertakings have their own limitations. Every action is tinged with an element of imperfection. The more one lives in his ordinary mortal mind, the more he is bound to feel unhappy and disgusted with life. But the celestial life lived in the Christ mind is the life of perfection, freedom and happiness. The difference between a worldly man and a man of God is while the former lives more in the individual mind, the latter dwells often in the universal mind. We see this clearly in the life of Jesus. On a few occasions we find Him uttering these words of limitations of a mortal being: "Why do you call me good? There is nothing good except my Father in heaven." "I of my own self can do nothing." "If possible, this cup may pass away from me." "Oh God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" On all other occasions, knowing His true nature and identity with the Creator, He spoke the immortal words of wisdom: "I and my Father are one." "I am the truth, the way and the life." "I am the light of the world." "He who has seen me has seen the Father." etc.

One profound Truth which we read in the Old Testament is that God is *I am*, as Moses himself heard His voice as *I am that I am*. This *I am* which has always been *I am* is the absolute reality. "*I am* before Abraham was." "*I am* the truth, the way and the life." "*I am* with you always." If we are to abide in the universal Christ, we must experience this *I am* that is ever-present in us.

Jesus does not call men to a particular religion or denomination but to the supreme path of love and righteousness. The extent to which His exhortation has gone is to love

even our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and to bless those who curse us. Love was the recurring theme of His whole message. It was the key to open the door of the Kingdom of Heaven. Above all, did He not ask us? "Love ye one another as I have loved you." How far have we been true to His words? The frequent wars and revolutions in the Christian world and the growing number of people who break away from the church having lost their faith in it are clear indications that the church and Christianity have failed in their profession of love.

Of all religions of the world, Christianity can legitimately be proud of having contributed more to the material well-being of mankind. By extending and imparting education to the ignorant, it has helped to give mental enlightenment and emancipation to many enslaved millions who would have otherwise remained in ignorance and poverty. Christianity's service in the field of health and medical care is not a small achievement.

The spiritual and contemplative life of Christianity can be seen in the rich traditions of the Catholic Church. But its great drawback has been that it rigidly binds the mind of its followers keeping them almost under virtual subjugation. The Protestants, on the other hand, have been protesting too much. In their eagerness to be free from the dogmas, rigidity and authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church they became too free and lost contact with the Inner Life. In the field of mystical and contemplative life their original contribution is very little.

In our undue concern for material well-being, spiritual life is being utterly neglected. This is true all over the world, but in highly prosperous Christian countries of the West this is more true. Even if we fill the whole world with money, food, hospitals and material comforts, the misery of the world would still continue, as long as man's spiritual need is not satisfied. As Jesus Himself says, "man does not live by bread alone." It is

thousand times better to live in rags with Christ than in a palace without Him. Let us not forget His words: "Blessed are the poor." In the West where even the ordinary people have access to all sorts of luxuries and comforts, we find a growing number of mental diseases, alcoholics and neurotics. More and more people break away from the church, its dogmas and doctrines. The impressive but routine ceremonies of the church, the well-sounding but repetitive sermons of the priests or pastors cannot adequately satisfy man's hunger for God.

"For 2000 years we have had Christianity without Christ, but hereafter we must have only Christ without Christianity." "The difference between Christ's teachings and the Christianity of today is 1966 years!" "Christ and His teachings are like a mighty elephant, but the church and its doctrines like a little cage. When the upholders of the church and its doctrines find that the mighty elephant cannot be contained in their man-made cage, they begin to cut its limbs so that they would somehow be able to fit it into their cage." These are harsh words, but they come from some thoughtful and intelligent Christians of the West. When we try to find the truth of their allegations, we cannot say that they are baseless accusations. There is an element of truth in these charges.

Heart-breaking brutalities are spreading all over the world and the cracks of growing unrest, decay and degeneration are visible in all countries. To build a new society the world is in urgent need of a revolution, not a revolution with guns and bombs, but a revolution based on spiritual values. All the so-called revolutions fought for man's material well-being create more problems than they wish to eradicate. Many of the world's so-called revolutionaries

have been really reactionaries because they reacted against certain particular situations. He who reacts is a reactionary. The wise never react. But Christ was a true great revolutionary. Our society is based on many false values. We are selfish, aggressive, ambitious, competitive, hateful and nationalistic. These basic evils are the root causes of all our problems. No improvement in the conditions of the world can ever happen, as long as we individually do nothing to be free from these vices. To fall in line with the ways of society is quite easy, but not to accept their false values and yet to live in the world would require extraordinary courage. It means living dangerously. It has been said: "When a Christian becomes a true Christian, then the real revolution begins."

Organized religions like organized nations can be a great curse for mankind. Each person should be left alone to work out his own destiny or salvation. Perfect freedom both inside and outside, but not liberty of the mind to do anything as one pleases, should be the cherished goal of human life. Without this freedom life is not worth living. Just as a bird whether tied by a gold or iron chain is not free to fly, so a mind tethered by dogmas and doctrines, however good they may be, loses placidity and pliability which are so essential for a spiritual life of enlightenment and emancipation.

Christ stands before us in His cosmic form and His words can still be heard ringing in our mind:

"Be ye holy as I AM holy,
Be ye universal as I AM universal,
Be ye pure as I AM pure,
Be ye forgiving as I AM forgiving,
Be ye compassionate as I AM compassionate."

Heaven is the domination of sattva in the mind.
Hell is the predominance of tamas.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

NO MIND DOCTRINE OF RAMANA

By
R. N. SARAF

IT would have been preposterous had it not been true to say that there is no mind. Ramana's statement on this subject is unequivocal and emphatic. He definitely says there is no mind at all. The meaning is not so easy or so absurd as at first appears. When the mind is denied, the phenomena that are taken for mind are not denied. What is denied is a unitary and self-subsisting thing. The mind is tripartite and consists of knowledge, emotion and will. They are separate and exclude each other. They have a point of reference beyond themselves. Thus the mind is not a unitary thing and depends for its existence upon something else other than itself. What does not exist by itself is said not to exist. When we say that water is not an element we mean that it does not subsist by itself. Separating the elements that compose it would destroy it. So if we analyse the mind into its components, the illusion of the mind which is produced by the composition of its components disappears. The illusion of the unity of the mind is produced by the unity of the consciousness. Thoughts occur, emotions arise, will decides in unintermittent succession. Consciousness reveals them as conscious states and the conscious states produce the illusion of a separate mind. Bhagavan Ramana says :

"The conscious states depend on the ego-consciousness ;
the mind is nothing more than these states ; therefore the ego-consciousness is the mind."

The ego is nothing more than the illusory unity of the conscious states. When the consciousness takes off its support, these states all fall to the ground and the illusion of the mind is destroyed. The consciousness sustains the ego which unifies the states. If one

tries to find out the ego, Bhagavan says it falls down — merges in the self from which it had sprung.

Bhagavan Jnaneshwar says the same thing. He says :

"Like the blueness of the sky, or the water in the desert ;
the mind springs into existence without any reality of its own."

The appearance is true enough as appearance but if taken as reality is wrong. How the mind comes into existence out of nothing is a mystery far beyond the reach of the human mind. It is but natural. Nobody can know his own beginning. To know one's beginning one must be in being, before one has come into being. This is absurd. So the beginning of the mind is beyond the reach of the mind. The mind can find out that it has no substantiality of its own by self-inquiry. It finds out that it ceases to be in sleep where there are no thought, no emotion and no will. It has no other existence when the memory which supplies the clue itself comes into being when the mind comes into being. At the time of sleep the memory remains merged in its source, the source of all. The daily emergence of the mind from its source is a daily miracle. How the lost mind emerges entire can never be known. It is like waking to know the sleep. The waking would destroy the sleep and never know it. So the mind would destroy itself if it tried to know how it came into being and merged in the self.

When we say that things have no colour we substantiate the statement by showing that colour is nothing more than reflected light. So when we say that there is no mind we must be able to show that it is nothing more than a reflection.

PROBLEMS OF RIGHT AND WRONG

By
'SEIN'

IN the very first class of the ethics course for my M.A. I was told that there were two ways of looking at ethics: as good and bad or as right and wrong, and that the former was the more profound. This made a lasting impression on me. I felt strongly that the two ought always to be the same but was unable to deny that they are not. I was given the example of a rishi who was sitting in his ashram in the forest when a wealthy merchant rushed in and took refuge from a gang of thieves who were pursuing him. They soon reached the ashram and asked the rishi whether any one had come there. He admitted it and the merchant was dragged out and butchered. It might be said that the rishi had done right in telling the truth, but it was certainly not a good action, since it caused an innocent man's death. What would Bhagavan have done? Probably he would have sat immobile and abstained from answering; but few people, even rishis, have the power of Bhagavan's silence.

I have since learned that Lord Krishna himself declared at the end of the Mahabharata that the Kali Yuga, the fourth epoch of time, had now set in, when complete rectitude would no longer be possible. One has to gauge which course of action will entail the greater benefit or justice and the less harm or injustice and follow it.

Some exponents of ethics go to the length of denying that there is any right and wrong and reducing both to social conventions. For instance, in a country where polygamy is accepted a man is doing nothing wrong in having more than one wife; in a country where it is banned he is. Or again, in a country where duelling is accepted a man who kills a personal enemy in a quarrel may be not only not guilty but actually honourable, whereas in a country where it is not

he may be guilty of murder. One has to admit that there are no absolute uniform standards. When some thieves once broke into the Ashram and began to steal the articles there (only very few) and beat the inmates, including the Maharshi, Sri Bhagavan would not allow the latter to resist. He said: "Let them stick to their dharma and we will stick to ours. Our dharma is to be sadhus." That implies that dharma does not necessarily mean 'what is right', because the thieves' action could certainly not be called right. It may mean simply 'accepted way of life'. Then suppose a householder had been staying with his wife and children in a house near the Ashram and the thieves had attacked him too; would Sri Bhagavan have allowed him to resist? I think he would, because his dharma was not to be a sadhu but a householder and this involves having rights and property and defending them in case of need!

The question may arise, however, whether it is good or bad to exercise one's rights in any given circumstances. If a thief breaks into my house in a country where a householder has the legal right of self-defence and I am armed I may have the right to shoot him, but the question still remains whether it would be a good thing to do. That, however, may be beside the point, since it is confusing the adjective 'right' in the sense of 'correct' with the noun 'right' in the sense of 'legal authority': "I have the right to beat my children but would it be right to do so?" There is no hard and fast rule.

So far as one can generalise it may be best to say that what is good is concerned more with the spirit of the law and what is right with the letter of the law. After Duryodhana had cheated the Pandavas out

of their inheritance and his father had sent them on a twelve-year exile, Lord Krishna gathered his forces and, in a lightning swoop on the forest, urged Yudhishtira to turn back and make an immediate attack before the Kauravas had time to mobilise resistance and while their potential allies were still alienated by the shock of their treacherous conduct. Yudhishtira refused on the ground that the Kaurava action had been legally right although morally wrong, and he therefore felt bound by it. Yudhishtira was right by the letter of the law, Sri Krishna by the spirit of the law. It was hard for Yudhishtira to see this because the letter of the law was against him, and it is always harder for an honourable man to go against the law when it suits his interests to do so ; it makes him suspect his own motives and wonder whether he is not indulging in false casuistry.

There was another occasion when Yudhishtira was still farther from the spirit of the law or from goodness, and that was when his wife, Draupadi, was declared forfeit after the infamous dicing game and dragged before the assembled kings. He could accept the forfeiture and submit to it as being legally right but there was certainly no goodness in it. Even if he had brought it on himself, Draupadi had not, and what about her suffering ? Didn't that matter ? It did to Sri Krishna and he refused to sanction such legalised wrong-doing. It is noteworthy that in the Yaksha Prashna, the list of questions on dharma put to Yudhishtira, he is asked what is the typical corruption of the Kshatriya and he himself states that it is desertion of a dependent in time of need ; and yet this is just what his treatment of Draupadi amounted to !

Lest this article should seem too critical of Yudhishtira, let me mention also the classical case when he came out strongly on the side of goodness against rectitude. That was when Drona was using foul means to slaughter the followers of the Pandavas and, on Krishna's bidding, Yudhishtira and the other four told him a lie which took away his zest in the fighting. Arjuna was very

upset by what they had done, but Yudhishtira boldly declared that he stood by it, even if he was to be punished for it, because it had done much good and saved many innocent persons from destruction.

It is impossible to give a categorical answer from a book to all such questions. One has to do what is right to the best of one's ability but also to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to others. Yudhishtira clung to his own interpretation of what was right, even against himself, but in doing so he overlooked the suffering caused to Draupadi and to his brothers. Such rightness can be a subtle form of egoism. Frequent problems assail one in daily life and the interpretation is not always easy. A lawyer once asked Sri Bhagavan whether he could continue to practise his profession, since it sometimes led to the condemnation of his opponent, and Bhagavan said that he could. He did what he considered right, he interpreted the law in the way that he considered right, and there his responsibility ended.

There are some ethicists and psychologists who reject both the conception of right and wrong and that of good and bad and speak only of 'socially acceptable' and 'socially unacceptable' actions. This is an increasingly popular attitude. Its implication is that whatever is generally accepted is right and to be conformed with. But it is a superficial attitude because the misfit, what the psychologists call the 'socially maladjusted person', may be above the generally accepted level as well as below it ; and that is where spiritual considerations impinge on ethical or psychological. The Athenians condemned Socrates and the Jews Christ for blasphemy. Both of them were put to death for militating against the socially accepted code of their day. But it is the verdict of Christ and Socrates which has been accepted, and in going counter to it their judges have in fact condemned themselves.

This leads us to raise the whole question of the motivations of our judgements. In modern ethics and psychology an action is condemned primarily for external reasons,

because of the harmful effect it will have on society if freely indulged in ; but spiritual teachers condemn an action primarily for internal reasons, because of the harmful effect it will have, if persisted in, on the man himself. One's own character is constantly in the making. The actions that one performs, good or bad, right or wrong, solidify into molds or action-patterns, that is into *vasanas*, and these provide the channels in which one's future actions tend to flow. A wandering sadhu once sent a message asking Sri Bhagavan what his future would be, and Bhagavan replied : "tell him that as his present is so will his future be." A simple and yet a profound reply ! Whatever theories we develop we cannot help modelling our future because our present actions are doing that automatically.

This is one more illustration that intelligence is needed. It is not easy to be rightly guided. First it is necessary to understand what the right decision is, then to take it. Both processes are character forming. Neither is sufficient alone. There is a story that once three rishis were ascending to

heaven when they saw an eagle carrying a serpent in its talons to feed its young. The first of them released it by his yogic power. He fell back to earth for having robbed the young egrets of their food. The second, seeing this, immediately restored it to the eagle by his yogic power, and he fell back to earth for having deprived the serpent of its life. The third remained impassive and continued on his way to heaven. However, even though one remains aloof towards them, decisions have to be taken. There are situations where action is incumbent as well as where it is redundant.

Indeed, it was noticeable that when any one asked Sri Bhagavan what to do in any circumstance he usually sat silent, leaving the questioner to seek his own decision. Only then, when the decision had been taken, would he show by gracious approval or cold disapproval whether it was right or not. Really what we are seeking in our sadhana is *anubhava*, spiritual experience. Right action smoothenes our way to it by removing obstructions and wrong action causes obstructions, but it is a living thing and cannot be known vicariously or by a set of rules.

"I" The Stillness

By A. R. Nikam

The 'Silence' in me,
and the great Silence outside,
Communicate !
Only the feeling of 'me'
divides their Union !

The 'stillness' in me,
and the great Stillness outside,
Communicate !
Only the feeling of 'me'
prevents their Union !

This feeling of 'me'
is 'empty sound'
veiling the Great Silence !

This feeling of 'me'
is the 'noisy mind'
veiling the Great Stillness !

Now that I know —
I am the 'Silence'
I am the 'Stillness'
the barrier of I, me and mine,
that compose the mind,
will be swept away,
Some day
By the Great Silence,
By the Great Stillness.

Indeed that Great Silence is Me !
Indeed that Great Stillness is Me !

EATING THE MANGOES

By
Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

IF we were given the choice between going to heaven and listening to lectures about going to heaven, Dr. Carl Jung is said to have remarked, most of us would choose to attend the lectures. I know a distinguished scholar who has a comprehensive collection of books on World Mysticism, and who lectures brilliantly on the various methods of Meditation, from the simple self-inquiry of Sri Ramana Maharshi to the mondo-koan techniques of Rinzai Zen. He can keep an intellectual audience spellbound with his comparative exposition of Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi, and illustrate it graphically from the lives of the great mystics of the major religions. "How long have you been practising Meditation?" I asked him when he was showing me round his Meditation library. "I am afraid I don't find any time for learning to meditate," was the simple reply of this distinguished scholar in the field.

When you are standing under a mango tree, Sri Ramakrishna would say to his disciples, don't waste your time and energy counting the leaves, but climb the tree, pluck the mango and eat it. The mango is the most luscious fruit I have tasted, and this is the season for them all over India. I shall not, therefore, hesitate to repeat the words of Sri Ramakrishna, "Let us stop counting the leaves, and start eating the mango fruit."

Counting the leaves is information; eating the mango is realization. Here is a seven-fold practical program or Sadhana which can lead us to this resplendent realization:

1. Meditation
2. Doing only one thing at a time
3. Japam or use of the Mantram
4. Discriminating restraint of the senses

5. Association with similar-minded people
6. Putting the other person first
7. Some form of selfless service

Is it not possible for a human being to attain instant Samadhi without practising Meditation? Yes, it is possible for a Ramakrishna or a Ramana Maharshi. But for the vast majority of ordinary people like you and me the long laborious discipline of Meditation is unavoidable. In the inspiring words of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

"Who knows the Atman
Knows that happiness
Born of pure knowledge:
The joy of sattwa.
Deep his delight
After strict self-schooling:
Sour toil at first
But at last what sweetness,
The end of sorrow."

Meditation is concentration, and concentration is consecration. It is only as long as we have a grasshopper mind and live on the surface level of consciousness that finite things — such as money or material possessions — would seem to bring some sort of satisfaction. But as our concentration grows, it will become increasingly clear to us that our real driving need is, not for anything that is fleeting, changing or finite, but for the immortal, immutable and infinite Reality called God who dwells in the depths of our consciousness. When we are letting our mind become many-pointed, we are moving away from the Lord of Love who is the heart of our heart, the life of our life; when we are making our mind one-pointed we are moving closer to Him. "If the heart wanders or is distracted," says St. Francis de Sales, "bring it back to the point quite gently and replace it tenderly in its Master's

presence. And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back and place it again in our Lord's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed."

The dynamic discipline of Meditation can be greatly facilitated if we try to do only one thing at a time instead of dividing our attention among two or three things at the same time, as we are being conditioned to do in the name of efficiency or relaxation. Concentration is efficiency; concentration is relaxation. Division is inefficiency; division is tension. Swami Vivekananda has said, "Concentration is the quintessence of education."

When I was in my early teens I had just discovered Washington Irving, and could not tear myself away from his delightful story of Rip Van Winkle. At breakfast I was reading Rip Van Winkle and eating rice-cakes with cocoanut chutney at the same time. "This is poor reading and poor eating," remarked my grandmother as she took away my plate of rice-cakes and cocoanut chutney.

Whenever I go to the campus cafeteria I cannot help being surprised at the number of students who are drinking coffee, smoking and reading books simultaneously. This is going against one of the fundamental principles of education which is to give all our attention to one thing at one time. It is not difficult for me to visualize my illiterate grandmother walking into the cafeteria and taking away from every student the cup of coffee and the pack of cigarettes, leaving them with only their books to be read with undivided attention.

One of the valuable aids in making the mind one-pointed (to translate the Sanskrit term *Ekagra*) is by scrupulously refraining from doing more than one thing at a time. When your boy friend is telling you about the climax of his unwritten novel, even if a peacock comes on the scene and starts dancing in front of you, don't look at the dancing peacock, but keep both your eyes on the future novelist. On the other hand,

when you are looking at the dancing peacock, give all your attention to it so that you don't even hear the words of the coming Hemingway. In the words of the Buddha, when you are walking, walk; when you are sitting, sit — don't wobble!

Most of us are under the impression that we spend our waking hours in logical, systematic thinking. If we can observe the thoughts of even a profound scholar, we would be surprised to find how his mind jumps about, like a grasshopper, from thought to thought, sometimes relevant, sometimes irrelevant, sometimes profound, sometimes puerile. When the temple elephant is being taken in procession through the narrow lanes in the bazaars of India, his wandering trunk snatches clusters of bananas from a fruit stand on one side, then passes on to the other to pick up cocoanuts from a grocery store. In this manner he weaves his way through the winding lanes, his trunk in constant motion. The mahout, who takes good care of the elephant, will give the animal a bamboo stick to be held firmly in his trunk so that it may not wander from stall to stall.

This is exactly what the Mantra does for the wandering mind. Not only does the Mantra steady the mind from wandering thoughts, but it can serve as a tremendous transformer when tidal waves of anger, fear or lust rise up in our consciousness. On such occasions, instead of taking it out on those who are near and dear to us, we should go for a brisk walk, if possible, repeating the Mantra — Hare Ram, Jesus Jesus, Hail Mary, Om Mani Padme Hum, Barukh Ata Adonai, Allah, or any other spiritual formula sanctioned by the Scriptures. The rhythm of the Mantra, the rhythm of the footstep, and the rhythm of the breath blend into a healing harmony.

The intense repetition of the Mantra thus enables us to direct into constructive channels the Prana or vital energy which would otherwise have run amuck, inflicting severe damage on our body and mind. It is sometimes asked whether this does not lead

to suppression. In suppression, as I understand it, a wave of anger is pushed down where it continues its destructive work below the surface level of consciousness. On the other hand, in Japa or the repetition of the Mantra, the very power that is agitating the mind in the form of anger begins to calm it. The power is there in both the cases ; in anger it is working against me because I am the victim ; in Japa it is working for me because I am the victor.

Mahatma Gandhi has pointed out that the control of the palate is a valuable aid to the control of the mind. In our abundant American economy, under the influence of sense-stimulating advertisement campaigns, we often find ourselves consuming articles of food that have little nutritional value and are perhaps even harmful, such as candy that leads to cavities. When your mind is craving for a log of pecan delight, say to it, "You may have it in a couple of hours." It is the nature of the mind to keep changing and you need not be surprised, therefore, if at the end of two hours it is demanding to go for a restless ride on a motorcycle. Another way of tackling a sense craving is to offer it a healthier substitute — raisins instead of candy, orange juice instead of coffee. When there has been overindulgence, both the body and the mind may benefit from skipping a meal. The ancient Hindu

custom of fasting for a day fortnightly has been corroborated by a recent Russian scientific experiment as contributing to health and longevity.

It is not too difficult for us to exercise discriminating restraint over our senses if we associate with people who are following the same way of life. You may be inclined to believe that you are the only person in your community on the spiritual path, but if you look around you are likely to find others who too are engaged in the same search. From our own observation it may be stated that there is great interest today, particularly among the younger people, in the eternal verities.

It is in the bosom of our own family that we have the fullest opportunity to lead the spiritual life. We do not have to retire into the remote regions of the Rocky Mountains to bring about the dissolution of our ego. This can be done beautifully and with least violence in the family context by putting first the welfare of our parents, partner, children and friends. This does not mean saying "yes" all the time but saying "no" with love and respect when it is necessary in the interest of the other person. In contributing to the happiness of others we are ensuring our own happiness which steadily increases as our ego diminishes.

What is true now?

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Devotee : Is the theory of Evolution true ?

Bhagavan : The trouble with all of us is that we want to know the past, what we were, and also what we will be in the future. We know nothing about the past or the future. We and that we exist now. Both yesterday and tomorrow are only with reference to today. Yesterday was called 'today' in its time, and tomorrow will be called today by us tomorrow. Today is ever present. What is ever present is pure existence. It has no past or future. Why not try and find out the real nature of the present and every present existence ?

SYMBOLISM IN THE LIFE OF SRI KRISHNA - I

By

Dr. W. RADHAKRISHNAYYA

THERE are simple devotees who repeat lovingly the stories of Sri Krishna and his marvellous doings; there are naturalists who try to think out a rational explanation for the apparent miracles and there are modernists who speak scornfully of what they call 'superstitions'. All these are superficial attitudes. In fact the exploits of Sri Krishna are to be understood symbolically. This does not necessarily mean either that they did not happen or that they did; the symbolical importance of a story is independent of its historicity.

The stories of the life of Sri Krishna mostly come from the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata, being the work of the great poet and consummate artist, Veda Vyasa, and are therefore certainly not superstitious.

Let us recall: the *puranas*, meaning 'ancient', are ancient symbolical stories enshrining the inherited lore of the *sanatana* (Eternal) *dharma* set down by the great master, Veda Vyasa. The greatest of them is held to be that grand epic the Mahabharata, incorporating the Bhagavad Gita, the Song of the Lord Krishna. Even this, however, despite its beauty, adventure and pageantry, did not prove accessible to all, so he further added the Bhagavata. The Gita has been called the milk drawn from the cows of the Upanishads; and in the same spirit the Bhagavata has been called the milk-sweet made out of the milk, the sweetened food of it being readily available. But it still is good food, for it must never be forgotten that however captivating the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata and other Puranas may be, their main purpose is to provide spiritual instruction.

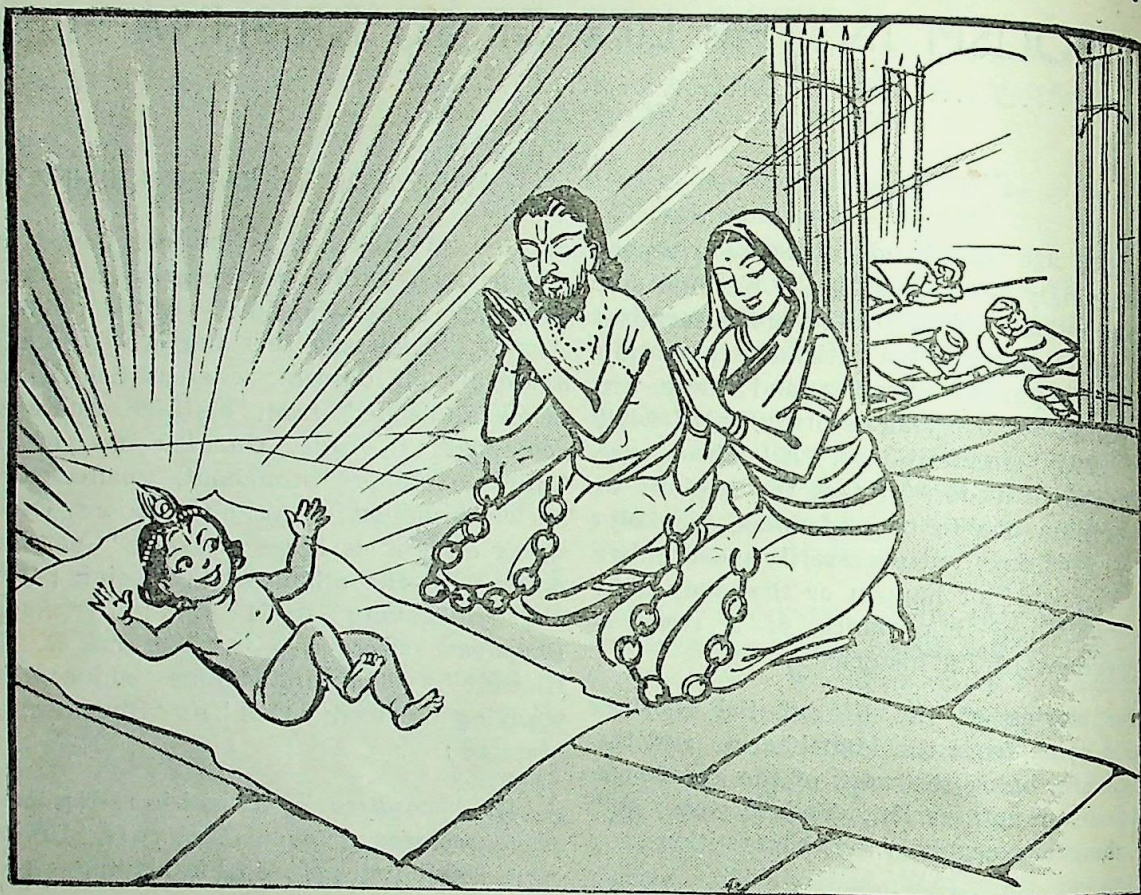
A large part of both the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata is taken up with the life and teachings of Sri Krishna. He is the eighth in the accepted puranic list of the ten

greater Avatars and is the best loved and commonly regarded as the greatest. Indeed there are some who do not consider him as Avatar. They say that the word signifies *avatarana* or descent, whereas Sri Krishna never descended from his high estate but remained in full consciousness of his Supreme Being throughout, unaffected by his environment or his own actions. Others speak of him as the *Poorna* or 'Complete' Avatar, all the other Avatars being partial. The Bhagavata itself says: *Krishnastu Bhagavan swayam* — "Krishna is God Himself". The indications adduced for applying the term 'God' or 'Bhagavan' to him are:

1. *Iswaratwa* or Lordship: He could command even the gods, Brahma and Indra, to do his bidding.
2. *Dharma*: he was the supreme teacher of *dharma*.
3. *Yasas*: fame or renown.
4. *Sri*: wealth, which he could bestow unasked on his devotees.
5. *Jnana* or Knowledge: he was called the Jagat-Guru or 'World-Teacher' on account of his teaching in the Bhagavad Gita and the Uddhava Gita.
6. *Vairagya* or detachment: shown for instance when he laughed cheerfully on hearing Gandhari curse him and his whole dynasty.

The Bhagavata, a sacred scripture written by a sacred author, the great Veda Vyasa, tells the life story of Sri Krishna from birth up to his giving up his mortal form.

The advent of Sri Krishna was at a time of social and moral break-up in some ways reminiscent of to-day. As to-day there were violent and treacherous rulers and deceitful double-dealers. The legend is that the earth



The prison grew bright with his lustre. The chains fell off. The guards, all slept.

could no longer bear the weight of such a generation and, in the form of a cow with sad face, tearful eyes and piteous cry, approached Brahma, the Creator, for relief. Brahma saw that there was no fault in his work of creation, so took her to Siva. Siva also saw no fault in his work of destruction, so the three of them repaired to Vishnu, the Supreme Lord, beseeching him to put things right.¹ The Lord graciously acceded to their request and decided to take birth in the Yadava dynasty for this purpose. He was accordingly born as Krishna, others of the celestials also being born to assist him and play their parts in the drama, notably Sesha who came as Krishna's elder brother Balaram.

The term used for the 'Supreme' here is *Vrishakapi*, implying the power of entering various bodies and instilling life into them. The cow represents mankind and Brahma the mind with four faces looking all four

ways. The Supreme is represented as reclining in the Ocean of Milk, that is the infinite potentiality of the heart.

Coming now to the actual story: Vasudeva (the head of the Vasus or celestial benefactors) married Devaki, the queen of the devas (that is of indriyas or faculties). In their previous birth they had been great devotees and longed for a divine child (for the new life of Realization). In this life their

¹ According to Hindu mythology the three Gods. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, constitute respectively the forces of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. One or another of them is regarded as the Supreme according to the viewpoint. From the point of view of preservation and salvation of the universe Vishnu is the Supreme, but from the point of view of the re-absorption (or destruction) of the universe in Non-Being, Siva. The Bhagavata is a Vaishnavite scripture and therefore represents Vishnu as the Supreme and Krishna as the Manifestation of Vishnu. This will come as a surprise to Advaitins who are accustomed to regard Siva as the Absolute and Supreme.

devotion ripened into *jnana* and *vairagya* (knowledge and dispassion which, when united, produce Realization). But Devaki had an elder brother, Kamsa (the ego, also represented as a reincarnation of the demon Kalanemi) who, on their wedding day, heard a voice declare that Devaki's eighth son would kill him (an intimation that the awakening of the Self would be the end of him). His first impulse was to slay her but then he relented and allowed her and Vasudeva to live on condition that they were to remain prisoners (in the bondage of *samsara*) and all their sons were to be handed over to him and killed at birth.

The six infants renounced by them in their longing for the Divine Child represent the *jnana-indriyas* (organs of cognition). There is a remarkable addition coming later in the story that Krishna, after coming to maturity, restored life to his infant brothers, that is to say that the faculties offered up in sacrifice are restored to the awakened Self.

The seventh child was Balaram, who was smuggled out to Gokula and brought up there in the house of Nanda, where he was later joined by Krishna himself. Kamsa was informed that there had been a miscarriage. Balaram represents *sattvic ahankara*, the

purified ego-sense, which has the strength of a giant.

Krishna himself, the Divine Child, was born a little after midnight on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Sravana, midnight being the darkness of envelopment in Nirvana and the eighth day the time of the rising moon of Enlightenment. He revealed himself in his true glory to his parents. The prison grew bright with his lustre. The chains (the bondage of ignorance) fell off. The guards (the impulses of the ego), all slept. The prison doors stood open. Vasudeva took the Divine Child in his arms and walked across the flood waters of the Yamuna with him (untroubled by the turbulence of events). He took him to Gokula (synonymous with the Goloka of the Puranas, the Abode of Serenity). Nanda is Ananda, the state of Bliss. His wife Yasoda had just given birth to a daughter whom Vasudeva took back in place of Krishna. The watchmen now woke up and hastened to inform Kamsa of the birth, but the infant girl was *Māyā*, the power of illusion. She showed herself in super-human power before Kamsa and then disappeared from his sight. Recognizing now that his schemes had failed, Kamsa released Vasudeva and Devaki.

(To be Continued)

Meditation on Truth

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Meditation on the meaning of truth as it is taught in Vedanta leads to the highest illumination. By this means, the misery of worldly life is altogether destroyed.

Faith, devotion, and constant union with God through prayer — these are declared by the sacred scriptures to be the seeker's direct means of liberation. To him who abides by them comes liberation from that bondage of physical consciousness which has been forged by ignorance.

— Sankara.

WHAT IS SELF-REALISATION?

By
DOUGLAS E. HARDING

IN order to answer this question as clearly as possible, let us distinguish six progressive stages:

Steps

- (1) to (2) Gradual
- (2) to (3) Abrupt
- (3) to (4) Gradual
- (4) to (5) Abrupt
- (5) to (6) Gradual

- (1) *Ignorance* — not knowing What one is
- (2) *Understanding* — knowing What one is
- (3) *Seeing* — catching sight of What one is
- (4) *Illumination* — steadily seeing What one is
- (5) *Self-Realisation* — being Who one is
- (6) *Full Self-Realisation*
— Steadily seeing What one is
steadily being Who one is
steadily realising That one is

This table is subject to variation in individual cases. For instance, Understanding (2) may come later than Seeing (3), and Illumination (4) may come later than Self-realisation (5). Again, some of the stages may be telescoped, though not actually avoided. And, of course, the titles chosen for the six stages are rather arbitrary and will not suit everybody. In fact, having set up such a scheme, it is easy (and, in the end, necessary) partially to demolish it. Before we do that, however, let us see to what extent it can clear up misunderstandings about the nature of Self-realisation and how it may be arrived at.

- (1) *Ignorance* — not knowing What one is:

The marks of this stage are that one believes the world is real in its own right, that one is a body which is a part of the world, and that one's consciousness is dependent upon the body.

The activities which normally go with this stage are the pursuit of pleasure, and when that disappoints the pursuit of

possessions and power, and when those disappoint the pursuit of reputation and fame.

- (2) *Understanding* — knowing What one is:

It is a decisive step in one's life when one turns from the surrounding world to oneself at its Centre, and asks What lies here. More or less gradually one comes to understand that one is not the body but Consciousness or the Self, that one is not a thing among things but that unique No-thing which is the Source and Ground and Container of all things. One comes to know, and in the end whole-heartedly to believe, that the Real is not what is experienced, but the Experienter, the One who is not in the world, but in whom the world is.

Profound intellectual work is characteristic of this stage. It takes the form of ever-renewed discrimination between the object or not-Self there, and the Subject or Self here, with the result that one becomes progressively detached from the world and identified with the Reality it depends on.

Also appropriate to this stage are talking and reading about spiritual matters, and the practice of systematic meditation. All this leads to growth of one's desire for Self-realisation, directly experienced.

(3) *Seeing — catching sight of What one is :*

Though it is a useful preparation, no amount of understanding the Self will ever build up to seeing the Self. And for a very good reason : seeing the Self is quite incompatible with thinking about the Self, and is a much simpler and more direct experience. Instead of *knowing* that right here, on the Spot one occupies, is this brilliant Clarity without so much as a speck of body-mind, one actually *sees* this Clarity, and sees it more sharply and convincingly than one sees anything else whatever. The Self here sees itself to be perfectly lucid, transparent, obvious. In fact, mere objects out there are, by comparison, hardly seen at all : only very limited aspects of them are perceived, remotely and one at a time, and in the spatio-temporal gap between observer and observed all kinds of errors are certain to creep in! Not so Self-seeing, where Seer and seeing and seen are one and the same, coincident, unseparated by any interval of time or space, with the result that there is no possibility of error. Moreover, because this Self-seeing is seeing what has no parts or aspects or history, it is always a total and perfect seeing : one cannot half see it, nor can one see half of it. To see the Self at all is to see it entire — while the seeing lasts.

This Self-seeing is true Liberation, the decisive step. Or rather, it is a sudden, unpremeditated leap in the dark : not the result of intention or training or merit, but the free gift of a Grace which is not to be commanded. Nevertheless this first seeing is, as a rule, a sudden flash which does not at once issue in a steady state. It fades immediately it is not attended to, and needs constant renewal. In a sense, therefore, this third stage is only the beginning of the true spiritual life.

(4) *Illumination — Steadily seeing What one is :*

One's seeing needs to be practised and stabilised, till it goes on all the while. Actually, 'practised' is misleading : 'enjoyed' is nearer the mark, because seeing is so very easy, natural, and agreeable. All the same, it can be neglected, and total dedication is indispensable. Normally, it will take years of more-or-less deliberate seeing before seeing becomes quite automatic, in all the circumstances of daily life. In the end, there will be no occasions which are unfavourable to Self-seeing.

(5) *Self-Realisation — being Who one is :*

Just as there is no footbridge between understanding the Self and seeing the Self, so there is no footbridge between seeing the Self and being the Self : the transition is a sudden leap, powered by Grace. No amount of seeing clearly *What one is* — namely, this Emptiness of body-mind — will automatically lead to the first-hand experience of being *Who one is* — namely, the One, the Sole Reality, the Alone. Certainly some progress in stabilising one's Self-seeing will make Self-realisation rather more likely. But they are distinct and independent orders of experience, and it is perfectly possible to advance in one bound from one's initial seeing of *What one is* to being *Who one is*, without any practice of the former. This radical shift of consciousness, of identity, comes out of the blue, when it wills.

The mark of this stage is that, instead of merely *thinking about* and *seeing* the One, one actually *feels* like the One. One answers to this Name, as before one answered to a human name. One directly experiences what it is to be the All and the Source of All.

But again, this realisation is not, normally, constant, but a series of realisations, flashes of the Supreme Identity separated by periods of Self-forgetfulness.

(6) *Full Self-Realisation — steadily being Who one is :*

Again, it is certainly not practice as a task or a duty, but as ever-renewed enjoyment,

which leads to the permanent establishment of the Supreme Identity.

And probably, long before that Identity is uninterruptedly enjoyed, it will be seen to include, besides seeing *What* one is, and being *Who* one is, realising *That* one is. In other words, though the experience of this sixth stage is in the last resort perfectly simple and indivisible, yet it must somehow include a total amazement — amazement at the 'impossible' fact that one has actually occurred, that anything exists at all, that the Self actually is. Here, one says 'I AM!' and that is enough. Not *How* I am or *What* I am, but *That* I am: not what I look like, or embrace, or do, but the simple and astounding fact that I ALONE AM — this incredible achievement of having, without help or reason or cause, raised Myself out of the chaos of non-existence and nullity into BEING. This alone is true spiritual knowledge — the knowledge of the unknowable Mystery, which is the Self's own wonder at Itself.

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The fact that some exceptionally gifted souls may be able to combine two or more of these six stages, thus abbreviating our table, does not make non-sense of the table. For most of us, it is essential to sort out our

confused ideas about Self-realisation, and cease (for instance) confusing the mere understanding of Stage 2 with the seeing of Stage 3, or the seeing of Stage 3 with the being of Stage 5; otherwise, we are likely to rest satisfied with a partial realisation, or (in the case of Stage 2) with no realisation at all, but only an intellectual grasp of the truth. Moreover, unless we recognise the difference between the stages of gradual progress, where systematic practice is appropriate (not to say essential), and the stages of sudden break-through, where practice is meaningless and only Grace counts, we are in danger of misdirecting our energies.

The only way to see the Self is to be interested enough just to look, once and for all, at the Spot one occupies. And the only way to be the Self is to submit, once and for all, to the experience of Aloneness. These two essential leaps in the spiritual life cannot be commanded or worked up to, or occur in slow motion. They are mysterious, unpredictable gifts. On the other hand, they are eminently worth knowing about, because they are more likely to be conferred upon those who have heard of them, and earnestly desire them. Grace gives no command performances, but has been known to respond to an urgent and heartfelt invitation.

II

SELF-REALIZATION AS TAUGHT BY SRI BHAGAVAN

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

The experience of the sages is that Self-Realization is one, whether a glimpse or ultimate. The only difference is that it remains a glimpse when the mind is not pure enough to hold it. After such a flash sadhana may begin in true earnest to still the mind so that thoughts, desires, vasanas, etc., whatever one may call it, do not hide our true nature which is ever present.

Sri Bhagavan says that in Nirvikalpa Samadhi the mind is temporarily immersed in the Self, like a bucket immersed in water, which is drawn out again by the rope of mental activity. In Sahaja Samadhi the mind is merged like a drop of water in the limitless sea. The drop, in essence the same as the sea, has only lost its limitation, having become the sea.

"These distinctions in Realization are from the standpoint of the others who look at them; in reality, however, there are no distinctions in release gained through jnana."

"One should enquire into one's true nature."

The Consciousness of "I" is the subject of all our actions. Enquiring into the true nature of that Consciousness and remaining as oneself is the way to understand through enquiry one's true nature.

Then there would shine in the Heart a kind of wordless illumination of "I-I". That is, there would shine of it's own accord the pure Consciousness which is unlimited and one, the limited and the many thoughts having disappeared. If one remains quiescent without abandoning that (experience) the egoity, the individual sense of the form I-am-the body, will be totally destroyed and at the end the final thoughts, viz., the "I"-form also will be quenched like the fire that burns camphor. The great sages and scriptures declare that this alone is Realization.

The meditation on the Self which is oneself is the greatest of all meditations. All other meditations are included in this. So if this is gained the others are not necessary.

Sri Bhagavan wrote with the authority of full spiritual knowledge. Even so he would add: "Thus say the Sages". Like all his expositions Self-enquiry is concerned with practical questions of the path to Self-Realization. In reply to questions such paths as meditation on one's identity with the Self and breath control are described but he himself prescribes only Self-enquiry or submission to the Guru. He would say: "There are two ways: 'Ask yourself—Who am I?' or 'Submit and I will strike down the ego'."

How to practise these paths is fully dealt with in '*The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*', a revised third edition of which has recently been brought out by Sri Ramanasramam.

III

IT IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT

By
NATANANANDA

(These were questions put by a devotee to Sri Natanananda and answered by him)

Question 1: What is the method of attaining peace?

Answer 1: (a) It is first of all necessary to know what the mind is.

(b) There is no such thing as a mind separate from the Self, one's real nature.

"When one enquires constantly into the nature of the mind it is seen that there is no such thing as the mind. This is the direct path to be followed by all."

—Upadesa Saram—v 17.

"When one enquires into the nature of the mind it is seen that the Self itself is the mind."

—Who Am I?

(c) According to this teaching of Sri Bhagavan, when the Self forgets that it is a separate entity different from the body and regards itself as the body, it is named the mind, the individual (*jiva*) and the ego.

(d) By regarding as the Self the body which is not the Self, one becomes attached to (develops desires for) mother, father, brothers, sisters, house, lands, wealth, fame, greatness, etc., all connected with the body. When these desires are fulfilled there is joy and when they are not there is sorrow.

(e) When the ignorance which is the cause of regarding the body as the Self is got rid of it is fully realized that the very nature of the Self is Peace.

(f) Although a temporary state of peace may result from practising worship (*puja*), repetition of holy names or sacred sounds (*japa*) and meditation (*dhyana*), one cannot attain peace until one frees oneself from his connection with the body.

(g) It is not possible to free oneself from the bondage of the body all at once. Long practice is necessary.

Question 2 : Is it possible (for every one) to attain, like Sri Bhagavan, complete enlightenment, that is Realization of Truth and Liberation ?

Answer 2 : These (three) are not different and are not newly acquired. They are ever present with all of us. If they were to be newly acquired, they would be lost also ; they could not then be permanent.

Even when the Self regards the body as the Self, it is in fact in its true state of Liberation, which is natural to it.

That which makes this Truth clear and frees the Self from ignorance is known as Guru's Grace.

Liberation is the birthright of every human being. But faith and Wisdom are also necessary.

Question 3 : Is it possible for one to attain Peace ?

Answer 3 : As has already been stated, Peace is the very nature of the Self. But it is covered up by thoughts. The evidence for this is the peace which one experiences in the state of sleep when there are no thoughts. It is possible to attain, if one makes the necessary effort, a state which is free from thoughts even while awake.

NOTE : It is needless to doubt whether one will attain Liberation in this life or not.

"O Son ! the first plane itself is difficult to gain. This gained, Liberation is as good as gained."

— *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, v. 155.

"If one associates with Sages what is the need for all these methods of discipline ? When a pleasant breeze from the south is blowing, of what use, tell me, is a fan ?"

— *Supplement to Forty Verses*, 3.

According to the above conclusion of the wise the very fact that you possess a great desire for Liberation and that you have begun to associate with sages, is due to the grace of the Guru and a sure sign that your aspiration will be fulfilled.

Question 4 : How is one to attain Self-Realization ?

Answer 4 : Self-Realization is (nothing but) utter desirelessness.

Siva and Sakti

By V. Venkataraman

Bhagavan once said to me : "Sri Nataraja (Siva in the cosmic dance of creation and dissolution of the universe) and Sri Arunachala are one and the same. The former is the Lord's dynamic aspect and the latter His static. There is no difference."

On another occasion when speaking about Siva and Sakti he said "Sakti is only Siva's Grace personified."

THE YAKSHA PRASNA

From THE MAHABHARATA (contd. from the last issue)

(Based largely on the annotated translation by K. Balasubramania Iyer published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.)

Yaksha

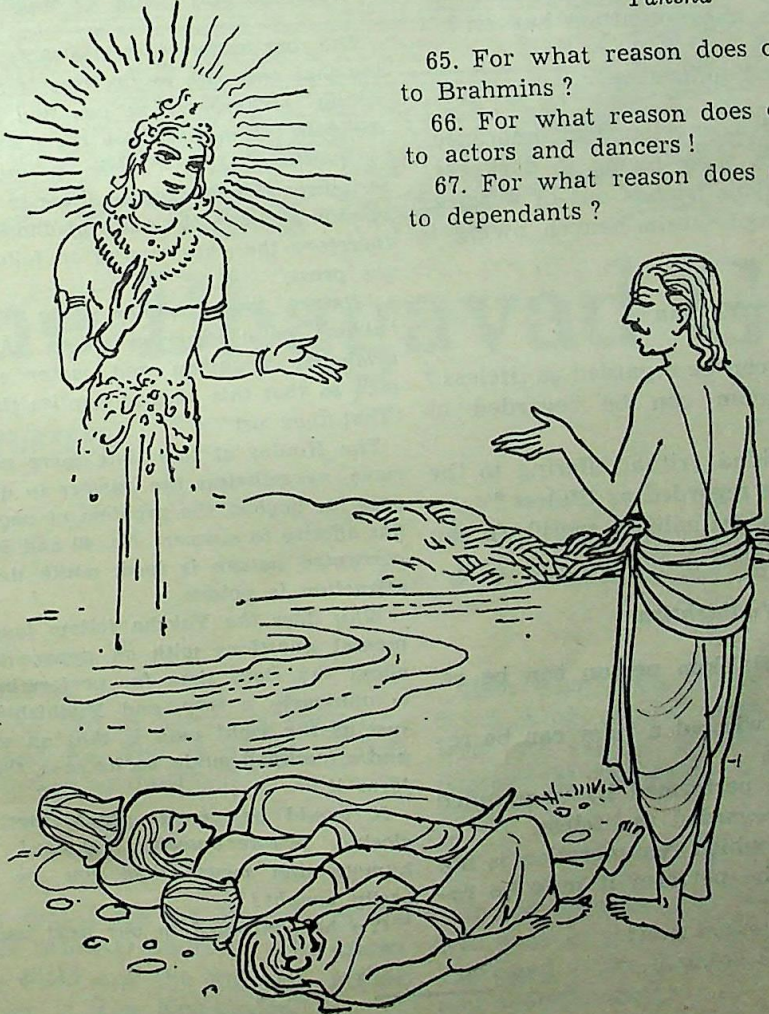
- 61. Renunciation of what makes one beloved ?
- 62. Renunciation of what frees one from grief ?
- 63. Renunciation of what makes one prosperous ?
- 64. Renunciation of what makes one happy ?

Yudhishtira

- 61. Renunciation of pride makes one beloved.
- 62. Renunciation of anger frees one from grief.
- 63. Renunciation of desire makes one wealthy.
- 64. Renunciation of grasping makes one happy.

Yaksha

- 65. For what reason does one make gifts to Brahmins ?
- 66. For what reason does one make gifts to actors and dancers !
- 67. For what reason does one make gifts to dependants ?



68. For what reason does one make gifts to kings ?

Yudhishtira

65. One makes gifts to a Brahmin for the sake of dharma.

66. One makes gifts to actors and dancers for the sake of fame.

67. One makes gifts to dependants for their maintenance.

68. One makes gifts to a king out of fear.

For the sake of dharma means for the right performance of sacrifices and other ritual.

Yaksha

69. By what is the world enveloped ?

70. Why does it not shine ?

71. Why does one abandon friends ?

72. Why does one not attain heaven ?

Yudhishtira

69. The world is enveloped in ignorance.

70. It does not shine owing to darkness.

71. One abandons friends out of avarice.

72. One does not attain heaven owing to attachment.

Yaksha

73. What man can be regarded as lifeless ?

74. What kingdom can be regarded as lifeless ?

75. What shrāddha (ritual offering to the ancestors) can be regarded as lifeless ?

76. What yajna (ritualistic sacrifice) can be regarded as lifeless ?

Yudhishtira

73. A poverty-stricken person can be regarded as lifeless.

74. A kingdom without a ruler can be regarded as lifeless.

75. A shrāddha performed by unqualified persons may be regarded as lifeless.

76. A yajna in which remuneration is not made to those who perform it may be regarded as lifeless.

Yaksha

77. What is the path to be followed ?

78. What is spoken of as water ?

79. What is food ?

80. What is poison ?

81. Tell me, what is the right time for a shrāddha ? After that you may drink the water and take some away with you.

Yudhishtira

77. The way of the righteous is the path.

78. Akasa (space or ether) is spoken of as water.

79. The cow is food.

80. Desire is poison.

81. When one meets a man qualified in the Vedas is the time for shrāddha.

What do you think, O Yaksha ?

The first answer indicates that it is no use saying that one path or doctrine is right and others wrong. Wherever one can find a true guide is the path. It is based on the answer found later to question 120: "Logic is inconclusive; the scriptures are divergent; there is no Sage whose opinion is final; the truth of dharma lies hidden; therefore the only way is to follow the path of the great."

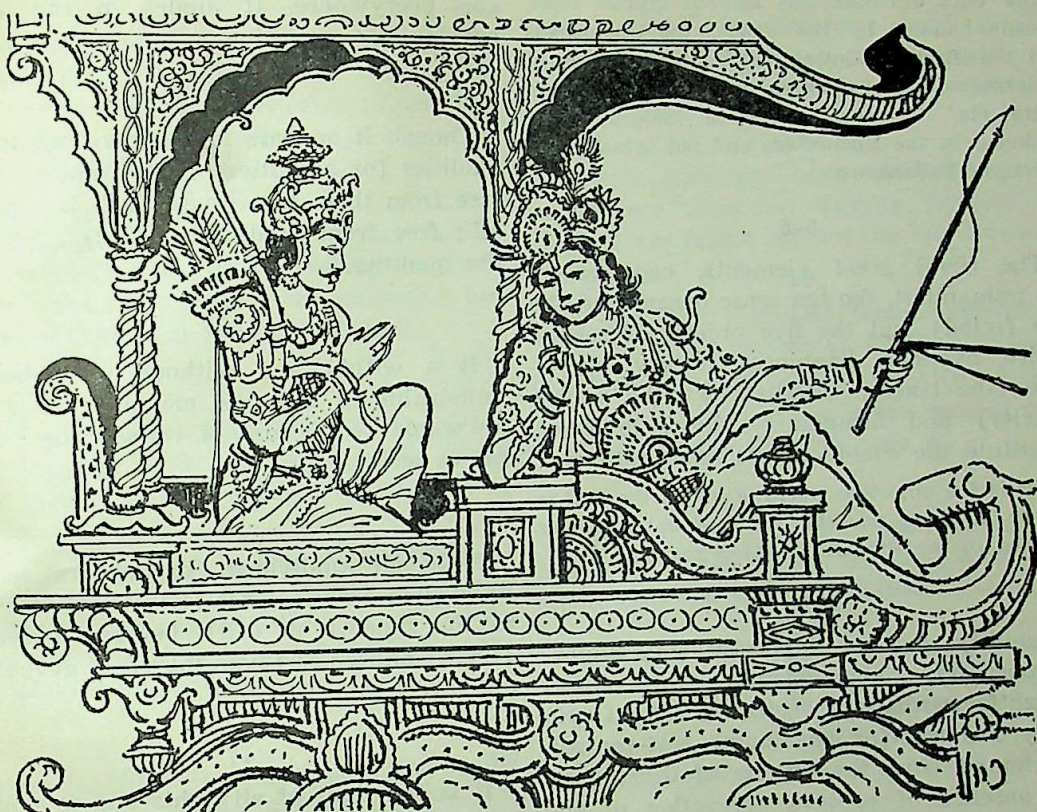
'Nature' on a higher plane is spoken of as 'akasa', on a lower as water. Akasa may also symbolise Brahman and water may symbolise man so that this answer implies the Mahāvākya: 'That thou art'.

The Hindus at this time were not yet vegetarians, nevertheless the answer to question No. 79 goes far beyond the problem of vegetarianism. It has affinity to answers No. 40 and 56. Simple uncorrupted nature is food, while desire or sense-attraction is poison.

Why does the Yaksha follow four such fundamental questions with an apparently trivial one about the right time for performing a rite ? It is obviously a trap, and Yudhishtira evades it; just as the right path is that on which one can find a qualified guide, so, he says, the time to perform it.

It would be nice to think that Yudhishtira's closing counter-question showed a sense of humour and meant, "So you see I am not so easily caught!"

(To be continued in our next issue)



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Sri Bhagavan said :

This body, O Son of Kunti, is known as the Field ; and he who is aware of it is called the Knower of the Field by the wise.

(Here 'knower' means 'illuminer')

2

And know that I am the Knower of the field in all the fields, O Bharata. The knowledge of the Field and the knower of that, in my opinion, is true Knowledge.

7

3

Hear what I say briefly : What the Field is, of what nature, what its modifications, what its source, also what He (i.e. the Knower of the field) is and what is His power.

4

It has been sung by the Rishis in manifold ways in various inspired verses and also expressed in the Brahma Sutras in reasoned and analytic texts.

The Gita discusses this age-old crucial topic, already handled by the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras or Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana. Shankarcharya understands 'Brahma Sutra etc.' to mean sentences indicating the Brahman in the Upanishads and not actually the Sutras of Badarayana.

5-6

The (five) great elements, ego, reason, the unmanifest, the ten sense organs and the one (mind) and the five objects of senses, desire, aversion, happiness, misery, aggregate (the body), intelligence (the visible activity) and firmness — these, in brief, constitute the Field and its modifications.

This is the objective world of which the Self is aware; of these are the twenty-four principles included in the Prakriti of the Samkhyas.

7-11

Humility, lack of hypocrisy (i.e. unpretentiousness), non-violence, forgiveness, straightforwardness, service of the Guru, purity, firmness (or steadiness), self-control, detachment from the objects of the senses, also absence of egoism, perception of the evils of birth, death, old age, disease and misery; non-attachment, absence of self-identification with son, wife, home etc., and constant equanimity of mind in desirable and undesirable events, unflinching and unswerving devotion to Me, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men, constant adherence to the Knowledge of the Self (or fixity in Self-knowledge) and perception of philosophical truths — all this is called 'wisdom' (*jnana*); what is not this is ignorance (*ajnana*).

12

I shall now describe that which ought to be known: (*jneya*); knowing which one attains immortality. It is the beginningless Supreme Brahman, which is called neither Being — *Sat*, nor non-Being — *asat*, (i.e. which is beyond the duality of the *Sat* and *Asat*, the manifest and the unmanifest.)

13

It has hands and feet on all sides, has eyes, heads and faces in all directions, has

ears everywhere. It abides in the world enveloping everything.

14

Though it appears to be engrossed in the qualities (or activities) of the senses, yet is free from them all; unattached, it supports all; free from qualities (*gunas*), it enjoys the qualities.

15

It is within and without (all) beings, immovable as well as movable; it is unknowable on account of its subtlety; it is far as well as near.

16

Although undivided, it appears to be divided in beings. That is to be understood as the support of (all) beings; pervades (them) and rules (over them) — devouring and (yet) generating.

17

It is the light of all lights and is said to be beyond darkness. It is wisdom (*jnana*), the object of wisdom (*jneya*) and the goal of wisdom, residing in the hearts of all.

18

Thus in brief the Field, the wisdom and the object of wisdom have been explained. My devotee, having understood this, attains My status.

Note: Here ends the topic of *Jneya*.

19

Know that Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (Spirit) are both without beginning and that modifications and qualities are born of Prakriti.

20

Prakriti is said to be the cause of the effect (viz., the body) and the instruments (viz., the senses¹). Purusha is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain.

¹ Alternate rendering: cause of the generation of causes and effects.

21

Purusha residing in Prakriti enjoys the qualities born from Prakriti. His attachment to the qualities is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

22

And the Supreme Purusha residing in this body is known as the Spectator, the Permitter, the sustainer, the enjoyer, the Supreme Lord and the Highest Self.

23

One who knows thus Purusha and Prakriti together with the qualities, is never born again, although engaged in all sorts of activities.

Here ends the topic of Purusha and Prakriti. The Gita adopts the Samkhya Principles but adds a higher Purusha over and above the two. Essentially the Gita-doctrine is non-dualistic, comprehending other principles.

24

Some see the Self within oneself by meditation. Others by the Samkhya Yoga (i.e. Jnana Yoga, the yoga of Wisdom), while some others by the Karma yoga (the yoga of Action).

25

Some, however, not understanding (these yogas) listen to others, who know and thus become devoted. They too, who are intent on hearing, surely cross (the ocean of) death.

This stanza probably refers to Bhaktiyoga (Yoga of Devotion). The different yogas are the different spiritual paths suitable to men of different temperaments. In the first three, personal effort is essential, while in the last surrender is more important than effort. Their destination is, however, the same.

26

Know, O best of Bharatas, that whatever is born, immobile or mobile, is born from the union of the Field and the Knower of the Field.

27

He who sees the Supreme Lord residing equally in all beings — the Imperishable One among the perishable, — sees (truly).

28

He who sees the Lord residing equally everywhere, does not destroy the Self by the Self and hence reaches the highest state.

29

He who sees (realizes) that actions of all kinds are being performed by Prakriti alone and that the Self is inactive, (truly) sees.

The Self is only a witness to the dynamic show of Prakriti that is not apart from it.

30

When he sees the separate existence of beings as rooted in the One and spread out from that, he attains Brahman.

31

This eternal Supreme Self, though dwelling in the body, O Son of Kunti, neither does (anything) nor is attached, as He is beginningless and has no qualities.

32

Just as the all pervading ether, being subtle, is not affected, (tainted or contaminated) (by anything) even so, the Self pervading the whole body is not tainted.

'Polluted' is equally good — used by some translators = *lipyate*.

33

Just as the single sun illumines this whole world, even so the Knower of the Field illumines the entire Field, O Bharata.

34

Those who perceive with the eye of wisdom the distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field in this manner and also the liberation of beings from Prakriti, reach the Supreme (Brahman).

Here ends the Thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, entitled "*The distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field.*"

THE UPANISHADS

III

We give here the third instalment of our translation of the Vedic chant which was conducted daily before Bhagavan and is now before his shrine in the Ashram. It is the second part of the morning chant and consists of the first three chapters of the Taittiriya Upanishad.

We aim at a literal translation, but the mental outlook of the ancients is so different from that of to-day that explanation is often needed. Some parts, for instance, are mantras in which the actual sound value is of prime importance. Some parts are inconceivably terse and cryptic; where it is stated, for instance, concerning the worlds, the luminaries learning or marriage what is the original form, the evolved form, the fusion and the process (of accomplishing the fusion). This is not an exposition in the modern sense of the word, but rather a reminder of themes for understanding or meditation.

On the other hand, some passages may seem needlessly prolix: for instance, the strange arithmetic listing various degrees of bliss as amounting each of them a hundred times the preceding one. This, of course, is to conjure up the conviction of 'beyond all this' in the mind of the chanter.

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

May Mitra be propitious to us! May Varuna be propitious to us! May Indra and Brihaspati be propitious to us! May Vishnu of the long strides be propitious to us!¹ I bow down before Vayu. O Vayu I bow down before thee. Thou alone art the manifest Brahman.² I will proclaim thee the law;³ I will proclaim thee the Truth.

May That protect me! May That protect the guru.⁴ May That protect me. May That protect the guru. Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

We will now expound the science of phonetics — vocalisation, tone,⁵ measure,⁶ force,⁷ uniformity⁸ and continuity.⁹ Thus is expounded the section on phonetics.

May glory be on both of us! May the lustre of Brahman illuminate both of us! We will now expound the upanishad¹⁰ of the samhitas,¹¹ under five heads, that is: the worlds, the luminaries, knowledge, progeny and the atma.¹² These they call the great samhitas.

First concerning the worlds : earth is the prior form, heaven the subsequent form, akasa¹³ their combination and air the process (of combining). Thus concerning the worlds.

Now concerning the luminaries : fire is the prior form, the sun the subsequent form, water their combination, and lightning the process. Thus concerning the luminaries.

Now concerning knowledge : the acharya is the prior form, the disciple the subsequent form, knowledge their combination, and the chanting the process. Thus concerning knowledge.

Now concerning progeny : the mother is the prior form, the father the subsequent form, progeny their combination, and procreation the process. Thus concerning progeny.

Now concerning the being¹⁴ : the lower jaw is the prior form, the upper jaw the subsequent form, speech their combination and the tongue the process. Thus concerning the being.

These are the great samhitas. He who knows¹⁵ these great samhitas as here expounded is endowed with progeny, cattle, the Light of Brahman, food and the heavenly world.¹⁶

May Indra who is the lord of the Vedas,¹⁷ who possesses innumerable forms, who has arisen from the immortal Vedas, endow me with wisdom. O Lord ! may I possess immortality. May my body be fit !¹⁸ May my tongue be honeyed ! May I hear well with my ears ! Thou art the sheath of Brahman concealed by intelligence.¹⁹ Safeguard for me what I have learned.

Sri²⁰ ever provides me amply and promptly with raiment, cattle, food and drink ; therefore bring her to me with wool-bearing animals for which I here offer oblation in the fire. Svaha !²¹

May Brahmacharins²² come to me, Svaha !

May Brahmacharins come to me quietly, Svaha !

May Brahmacharins come to me from all sides, Svaha !

May self-controlled Brahmacharins come to me, Svaha !

May Brahmacharins of controlled mind come to me, Svaha !

May I be renowned among men, Svaha !

May I be respected among the wealthy, Svaha !

O Lord, may I enter into Thee, Svaha !

O Lord, enter into me, Svaha !

In Thee who hast a thousand branches may I be cleansed, O Lord, Svaha !

As waters flow downwards, as months to the year, O World-Sustainer,²³ may Brahmacharins come to me from all sides, Svaha !

Thou art the refuge ; enlighten me ; absorb me in Thee !

Bhu, Bhuvā, Suva : these are three sacred utterances.²⁴ Besides these the Son of Mahachama taught the fourth. That is Maha, That is Brahman, That is the Atman. The other gods are its members.

Bhu is this world, bhuvā the inter-world, suva the upper world, and Maha the sun. All the worlds are made glorious by the sun.

Bhu is agni,²⁵ bhuvā is vayu,²⁶ suva is the sun and maha the moon. All the luminaries are made glorious by the moon.²⁷

Bhu is (denotes) the mantras,²⁸ bhuvā the samans,²⁹ suva the yajus³⁰ and Maha is Brahman. All the Vedas are made glorious by Brahman.

Bhu is prana,³¹ bhuvā apana,³² suva vyana³³ and Maha is annam.³⁴ All the pranas are made glorious by food.

These are the four vyahritis each comprising four and becoming fourfold. He who knows them knows Brahman. To him all the gods bring homage.

¹ This refers to the myth of Bali who acquired powers over heaven and earth. Vishnu appeared before him as a dwarf and begged him for as much land as he could cover in three strides. The boon was granted and the dwarf then grew to such immensity that he covered heaven and earth in his first two strides and for the third had no place left to set his foot except on Bali's head. A myth of the humbling of the ego once it grants a foothold to God.

² Air or wind is taken as the symbol or manifestation of Spirit.

³ The word translated 'law' is 'rtam' from which the words 'rite' and 'ritual' come. It has much the same meaning in Vedic Sanskrit as 'dharma' has in later texts.

⁴ Literally 'the speaker' or 'chanter' (of the scriptures) but the meaning is the 'guru'.

⁵ Various distinct tones or pitches are used in reciting Vedic mantras, as in a tonal language.

6 Measure or quantity in the sense of short, long and still longer vowels.

7 Stress or emphasis.

8 Evenness of pronunciation.

9 Combinations of sounds.

10 The word 'upanishad' means literally 'sitting together'; here it can be understood as the 'secret' or 'meditation'.

11 The collections of Vedic hymns are called *samhita*. Here it means 'combinations'.

12 Atma means the 'self' in the sense of the 'being'; here it is rather the physical being.

13 Akasa can mean 'ether' or 'space'.

14 atma.

15 i.e. meditates upon.

16 i.e. *Svarga*.

17 Literally 'the bull among the Vedas'.

18 The body and its faculties are required for full development.

19 Divine power and knowledge sprung from the Vedas is still only the sheath enclosing the Formless Absolute of Brahman.

20 Sri is equivalent to Lakshmi, the spouse of Vishnu and Goddess of Prosperity.

21 There is no dictionary meaning of the Vedic cry Svaha. It is somewhat akin to the Biblical 'So be it!' or 'Amen'.

22 Celibate students. The practiser is now a qualified guru appealing for disciples.

23 In Sanskrit *Dhata*.

24 *Vyahruti*.

25 fire.

26 air.

27 Here the viewpoint is changed. It will be seen in what follows that there are four sacred utterances, each to be meditated upon in four different ways. Thus they make up the sixteen kalas or parts of the Purusha. All this is to be regarded as indications for meditation, not as an exposition of theory.

28 The riks or verses of the Rig-Veda.

29 The chants of the Sama-Veda.

30 The liturgical portions of the Yajur-Veda.

31 The vital force which rises in the body.

32 The vital force which descends.

33 The vital force which pervades the body.

34 Food.

(To be continued)

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN

from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

64. To meet the needs of various minds
The Master spoke of various doctrines.
*Ajata*¹ is the only doctrine
He taught as from his own experience.

65. This Truth supreme is what at first²
The Lord revealed to Arjuna.
But finding His friend's mind bewildered
Reeling, Krishna later spoke
Of other doctrines.

66. By their diverse cosmogonies
What do the Holy Books intend?
Not to tell how the world began,
But to start the bold enquiry.
"How real is the world?"

67. "Him all things obey"
Means only that they act
As various beings, sentient and
insentient,
Stir and move
In mere presence of the thought-free
Sun
Arisen in the heavens.³

68. In mere bright presence of the Sun
The loadstone emits fire,⁴
The lotus blossoms;
The water-lily closes;
All creatures move or rest
According to their nature.

69. From His sheer potent presence
Flows His five-fold function,⁵
As the needle near the magnet trembles
And beneath the moon
The moonstone drips,
The water-lily blossoms
And the lotus closes.

70. In the bright presence of the Lord
Free from any trace of thought,
Persons in accordance with their nature
Aptly walk the ways of works.
Accomplish mighty tasks
And, turning inward, reach
The home of freedom.

¹ *Ajata* = No birth.

² In Chap. II of *Bhagavad Gita*.

³ Cf. paragraph 15 of "Who am I?"

⁴ Cf. a convex lens used to ignite cotton-wool.

⁵ Creation, preservation, dissolution, and grace.

WE INSIST ONLY

Wei Wu Wei he very naughty boy.

He say in July 67 Mountain Path, p 261:

The apparent universe is a colossal conceptual structure in mind, extended in the basic concepts of 'space' and 'duration'.

It is NOT

at all

what he says.

Wy?

Because how could our dear universe be what he or me says it is?

Because what he says is itself a concept and so without validity, except to the living dead.

Validity is a big word meaning what you say it means to you.

Sweet Wei Wu Wei is like a child asking for candy.

Let's give him som.

He say we do not exist.

He cannot legitimately say that wy?

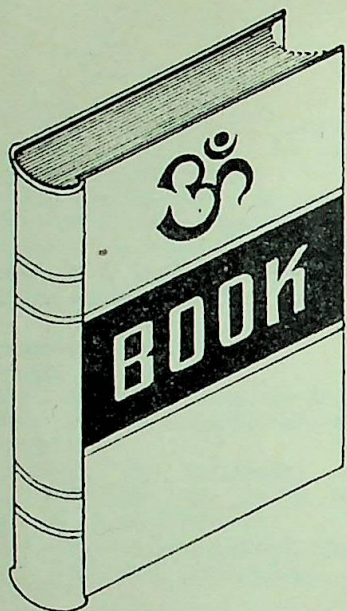
Be cause his statement itself disproves itself. He is there saying he does not exist. Ha ha. Ah Oh.

What he mean must be this:

WE DO NOT EX-IST.

AND WE NEVER SHALL EX-IST.

WE INSIST.



REVIEWS

✓ RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD: By S. Radhakrishnan; George Allen and Unwin; Pp. 186; Price in U.K. 25s.

We live in an age of transition and uncertainty, a scientific age with an anti-metaphysical bias. When man's basic needs are satisfied and he becomes bored with a surfeit of pleasure he may start wondering whether there is any purpose in life. Science is making tremendous strides reaching out for the moon and stars, bringing a nuclear age with weapons of destruction of such staggering power as to threaten total disaster if not controlled. So the height of this technological might has brought insecurity and bewilderment. What next? The author says that it is a desperate situation and a crisis which heralds either a total catastrophe or a new beginning. The human individual has to be renewed if human society is to be preserved. Having gone almost to the limit of our frail minds those immersed in science are also groping to find a meaning and a way out of the impasse. To quote Einstein, the greatest scientist of this age, faith is not inconsistent with the demands of modern science:

"The cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest mainspring of scientific research. My religion consists of a humble admiration of illimitable superior spirit, who reveals Himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."

Dr. Radhakrishnan evaluates the position of religion in a changing world with remarkable erudition, intellectual understanding and a deep religious feeling. This book offers a solution pointing beyond the doubts and insecurities of modern man to greater security and hope. Our knowledge of this world is limited. We only know the present or middle part which is a succession of changes. Man does not know the totality of the universe. "Scientific theories are not transcripts of reality. In our knowledge of the physical world there is our experience on the one side and the theory which is our conception on the other. The appeal of metaphysics is to a judgment more basic than either sense experience or rational logic. We devise experiments to test the validity of working hypotheses. Religious ideas are also tested and judged by the lives and experience of those who adopt them. There is an essential similarity of purpose in seeking truth." There need be no conflict between the scientific and religious approach. The antagonism stems mainly from misunderstanding and failure to appreciate the deepest insights of religion. Nobody doubts his own existence which means also for him the existence of the world. This calls for enquiry both religious and scientific. The author affirms that through the discovery of the intelligible world we reach the truth. Metaphysically it is rather through the discovery of ourselves that we reach the truth. Ramana Maharshi says that if we succeed in the quest "Who am I?" everything else is solved. Life remains a mystery in spite of the most powerful instruments devised by the human

mind by what is called scientific method and despite all the results of scientific research, which seeks to determine the laws according to which events occur. The cosmos is not a conglomeration of accidents. To those who seek in the right way the harmony and intelligent force that orders the entire universe becomes apparent, an intimation of a Presence that transcends thought.

SHAKINAH.

✓ **GLORY OF THE DIVINE MOTHER** (Devi Mahatmyam): By S. Shankaranarayanan, Distributors: Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 322, Rs. 12.)

There are many editions of the *Devi Mahatmyam* from the Markandeya Purana, giving the text of the 700 verses and translation in English. But the present brightly got-up volume stands out from all of them. It is an illuminating study of the scripture bringing out its spiritual, occult, philosophical and religious significance. The author, Sri Shankaranarayanan, himself an *upa-saka* from a very early age and a brilliant scholar with a genius for assimilation and unsurpassed presentation of difficult subjects, is singularly equipped for this task.

In the course of a comprehensive introduction of 127 pages, the writer studies the work (*Chandi* or *Devi Mahatmyam*) as a fine synthesis of the Vedic and the Tantric traditions. While discussing its role as a major scripture in the Tantric lore, he lays bare in modern terminology the science of the mantra, the organization of the worlds, the Deities, the means to communicate with them and the real significance or rituals. His expositions of the meaning of *bhutasuddhi*, *kavacha*, *argala*, *keelaka*, *nyasa* etc. make this a standard work for reference. There is a detailed description of the preliminaries that are enjoined upon one who seeks to do the *parayana*, worshipful recitation, of the text.

The full text of the three episodes, *charitas*, is given in bold types along with a faithful and yet readable translation in English. The translator differs from some of the popular interpreters in places, e.g. *tan vishannan suran drshtva chandika prahasattvara* or *vidyah samastastava devi bhedah striyah samastah sakala jagatsu*, etc. and gives strong reasons why he does so. He draws upon *Guptavati*, the celebrated commentary of Bhaskaracharya on the text, and expounds the esoteric significance of certain terms in a satisfying manner. His references to the writings of Vasishtha Ganapati Muni, especially his *Umasahasram*, for the delineation of the *matrkas*, Little Mothers,

are welcome for the new vistas they open on the topic.

The last section in *prayoga* is truly a remarkable exposition of the *saptasati* as a *sadhana sastra*—for secular as well as for spiritual ends.

A profound work of insight, scholarship, devotion and soul-power.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE THREE JEWELS, An Introduction to Buddhism: By Bhikshu Sangharakshita (Sthavira), Rider & Co., London, Pp. xii+276, 50sh.

Bhikshu Sangharakshita is already well-known to Indian readers and to Buddhists the world over through his many publications, and especially through his book. "A Survey of Buddhism" (published by the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore), in which he traces the historical and philosophical development of Buddhism. His present book *The Three Jewels* is concerned with the fundamentals of Buddhist life and thought: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. This is a subject which, on the face of it, seems to be so well-known, that people might wonder, whether anything new could be said about it. But Sangharakshita has not only succeeded in saying many new things, but in saying them in a most fascinating and inspiring way. Even the most familiar subjects are handled with such originality and spontaneity that one begins to see them with new eyes. Only a man who has made Buddhism his own way of life and who has experienced every phase of it, could write in such a convincing and refreshing way. Indeed, in this book Buddhism comes to life, and even the most technical, philosophical or psychological terms are made easy and lucid, supported by well-chosen similes or parallels in modern thought. The difficult subject of *trikaya*, the threefold body of the Buddha, for instance, has been illustrated in the following way: "Three people are looking at a flower. One is a child, one a botanist, and one a poet. All that the child sees is an object of a certain shape with a pleasing bright colour. The botanist, while not failing to observe its shape and colour, sees that the flower belongs to a particular species, thrives best at a certain time, place etc. The poet, though his eyes are as keen as the child's and though he knows about botany as much as the botanist, is not so preoccupied with the colour of the flower or the formation of its leaves and petals. He sees that the flower is alive, joyously alive, even as he is alive, and that there works through the frail perfection of its leaves and blossoms the same spirit of

life whose creative impulse he feels pulsing in the depth of his own being. Despite their great differences of vision, however, the child, the botanist, and the poet still see the same flower, not three different flowers." (p. 36). In other words, the *trikaya* doctrine does not proclaim three separate bodies, but three different aspects of the same reality in dependence on three different levels of consciousness: that of the senses, that of the mind, and that of intuitive spiritual experience. By keeping in mind these three levels of consciousness, Sangharakshita avoids the pitfalls of previous writers on Buddhism who, obsessed with the idea of scientific rationalism, tried to separate historical facts from mythological and legendary elements, by discarding all supernatural or miraculous events in the life of the Buddha as mere inventions or superstitions of credulous devotees. Sangharakshita rightly points out the profound psychological significance and spiritual truth hidden in these apparently legendary passages: "Far from being either devotional effusions or flights of poetic fancy these legends in fact make up a symbolical biography of the Buddha no less important than the historical narrative with which, in the traditional biographies, it is interwoven, and upon the main episodes of which it constitutes a spiritual-cum-metaphysical commentary of the highest value." (p. 30). The present reviewer has always maintained that the Buddha was not only fully cognisant of the Vedic and Upanishadic traditions of his time, but that he actually had been trained in yogic practices by his brahmanical teachers Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. This fact is born out by the apparently fantastic story of the serpent-king Mucalinda, who protected the Buddha after his enlightenment by winding himself in seven coils around the body of the Buddha and by spreading his seven-headed hood like a canopy above the head of the Enlightened One. There can be no doubt that here we have a description of the ascent of the *kundalini*, the 'serpent power' or spiritual energy through the seven psychic centres of the body, as Sangharakshita points out. The further fact, that the Buddha was described as having been in a state of blissful ecstasy during this even adds to the evidence that we are confronted here not with an outer occurrence or a material fact, but with an inner experience which has nothing to do with mythology and is of far greater historical importance than external happening. By recognising and understanding the psychological and symbolical language of Buddhist texts in their organic development and their different cultural settings,

Sangharakshita succeeds in giving a convincing and inspiring picture of the inner unity and consistency of Buddhist thought and life. It is due to this profound understanding that he is able to enter into the spirit of the Mahayana without abandoning his stand on the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. These in fact were wide and universal enough to accommodate a tremendous range of religious experience and philosophical interpretation, though they were hampered when the free life of the early *parivrajakas* (who wandered from place to place) hardened into the monastic institution of an organized Sangha with innumerable rules and regulations and a narrowly circumscribed body of canonical scriptures and commentaries. It was in revolt against this narrowing of Buddhist ideals and the splitting of the Buddhist community into monks and layman, that the great vehicle of the Mahayana with its all-encompassing, universal Bodhisattva Ideal came into existence: an ideal which eliminated the barrier between the monk and the householder as well as the duality of *nirvana* and *samsara*. "Therefore," in the words of the author, "there can in the ultimate sense be no question of escaping from the conditioned to the Unconditioned as though they were distinct entities. Or, to speak paradoxically, in order to be truly free one has to escape not only from *samsara* into *nirvana*, but from *nirvana* back into *samsara*. It is this 'escape' or descent that constitutes the *mahakaruna* or Great Compassion of the Buddha which is in reality His realization of the non-duality of the conditioned and the Unconditioned..." (p. 56). Out of this all-transcending realization, in which Enlightenment turns into infinite love for all sentient beings, arises the glorious conception of the Bodhisattvas, who out of compassion take upon themselves the limitations of conditioned life. And with this a vision of infinite beauty is revealed which pervades all aspects of the Mahayana and percolates down into all forms of popular Buddhism, which are vividly described in the last chapter of this book. The author's awareness of the element of beauty in the teachings of the Buddha and of its ever increasing emphasis in the scriptures of the Mahayana dispels the misunderstanding that Buddhism regards ugliness as real and beauty as unreal or that the higher one ascends in the spiritual life, the more ugliness is revealed at all levels of existence, while beauty becomes more and more illusory. It is true that our scale of values changes and that many of the things which appeared attractive and beautiful at a lower level of understanding may appear worthless from a

higher point of view, but this does not invalidate the sense of beauty nor diminish the chance to see beauty on all levels of existence. On the contrary, the higher we rise and the less we are blinded by selfish interests and desires, the more we are able to appreciate beauty even in the simplest things and in the lowliest forms of life, due to our capacity to look deeper into the nature of reality and to realize that every individual form is a unique expression of the Whole, due to the interwovenness of all things and states of existence that make up the universe. Sangharakshita supports this view by quoting the Buddha's own words from the Digha Nikaya, in which the Buddha refutes the allegation that he had ever taught such things as expressed in the following words wrongly attributed to him: "When one reaches up to the Release called Beautiful, and having reached it abides therein, at such a time he regards the Whole (Universe) as ugly." And the Buddha continues: "This is what I do say. Whenever one reaches up to the Release, called the Beautiful, then he knows indeed what Beauty is."

It is the realization of this beauty, shining through all the manifold forms and traditions of Buddhism, which makes this book so stimulating and enjoyable.

LAMA ANGARIKA GOVINDA.

STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION:
Tomorrow Publications, London, Autumn 1967,
pp. 190. 5sh. or 85 cents.

This quarterly contains an article "A Thomist Approach to the Vedanta" by Bernard Kelly in which he writes:

"It is said of Shri Ramana Maharshi—a saint of the Hindu 'way of knowledge' a jnani—that the question which possessed his childhood was this, 'Who am I?'. At length, as a very young man he left his home and, taking nothing with him, lay on a tomb determined not to get up until he had verified the answer to his question. He never came back."

This statement is fallacious and does not correspond to facts.

The question 'Who am I?' never possessed his childhood, nor even occurred to him. Nor did he lay on a tomb after leaving home, determined not to get up until he had verified the answer to the question.

What actually happened was a sudden unexpected spontaneous experience of death and what survived it, when Ramana Maharshi was in his teens. Only in the process of this experience did

the question of "Who am I?" arise resulting in complete and final Self-Realization. What followed later when he read about it in scriptures or the utterances of sages was only a verification of his own transcendental state arrived at through direct experience.

Here is a description of His experience in Ramana Maharshi's own words:

"It was about six weeks before I left Madura for good that the great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness, and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it, and I did not try to account for it or to find out whether there was any reason for the fear. I just felt 'I am going to die' and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or my elders or friends; I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

"The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words; 'Now death has come, what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' And I at once dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word 'I' nor any other word could be uttered. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and inert but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the 'I' within me, apart from it. So I am Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless spirit.' All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. 'I' was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that 'I'. From that moment onwards the 'I' or Self focussed attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on. Other thoughts might come and go like the vari-

ous notes of music, but the 'I' continued like the fundamental *sruti* (the monotone persisting through a Hindu piece of music) note that underlies and blends with all the other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading, or anything else, I was still centred on 'I'. Previous to that crisis I had no clear perception of my Self and was not consciously attracted to it. I felt no perceptible or direct interest in it, much less any inclination to dwell permanently in it." (*The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co. pp. 7-9).

LET GO: THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DETACHMENT ACCORDING TO ZEN: By Huber Benoit, George Allen and Unwin, pp. 277, 30 sh.

Dr. Benoit's approach is original in the sense that it is analytical from the standpoint of scientific psychology. Man, he says, should be able to know immutable bliss beyond time, independent of organic joys and sufferings and for this, he thinks, it is necessary that the intellect should develop all its possibilities completely. Having evolved through intellect to the plane of general or pure ideas, and symbols it allows man to become unidentified with his psychosomatic organism. According to him the complete development of our intellectual possibilities comprises a conciliation between the universal will of integration and the universal will of disintegration. Non-attachment will consist in balancing man's intellectual gaze by developing an antagonistic and complementary magnetism. The way of imagining absolute harmony results in a fabulous and unreal mental construction and a partiality towards joy. Psychomotive power seems to be concerned more with the process of bringing to completion the realization of our human nature than with the realization of our natural true state which is divine.

The author describes various modalities or disciplines in order to become a saint or a wise man but he does not think they can ensure the blossoming of the infinite possibilities of many.

This book is supposed to have been conceived from the point of view of pure Zen, of the Zen of Hui-neng and of Huang-Po. The author himself is aware of the fact that no Zen master has treated his problem of complete development which implies complete detachment in the way he has done.

Zen masters were not in the least concerned with the distinction between the convergent and divergent functioning of the intellect. They in-

cessantly put their disciples on guard against the intellect.

Why should the distinction between harmony and the idea that man has conceived about it be of the greatest importance? A wise man is in complete harmony without any ideas about it and those who entertain ideas about it are obviously not in harmony.

When it is a question of the reality underlying formal appearances our intellect must abstract itself from all forms, not only "other than verbal". It must become void. Reality underlying all appearances is transcendental and perennial hidden only by our thoughts and ideas and all the paraphernalia of the intellect.

We seek liberation and transcendence from our temporal limits and "the only way for us to have done with the impression of enslavement and to know absolute bliss consists in balancing the partial convergent functioning of our intellect by its partial divergent functioning. We must develop the intellectual automatism of divergence as we have developed those of convergence". Is this according to Zen?

Liberation can be gained by transcending or rather rejecting all intellectual automatisms, or in simple language by stilling our mind. It is said in the Psalms also "Be still and know that I am God". Sri Ramana Maharshi used to quote it as containing the essence of spiritual teaching. In Zen it is expressed as "void"; voiding the mind so that our transcendental pure ever-present state is not obscured.

According to the author we have no need of a guide if we wish to learn not to think; for lesser things he can be of use. This is a fallacy. The highest effort a human being is capable of is to learn not to think, to still the mind so as to realize "voidness" a state so sublime that no words can describe it; "words turn away baffled". For this a guide, a guru is certainly necessary. His grace and guidance is of utmost importance. So say the sages who have realized the Truth.

From an analytical point of looking at things one may get caught up in the complexity of a world of ideas and this does not lead to detachment nor realization.

Another fallacy is to write of the "probable" satori (enlightenment) of Buddha and Ramana Maharshi. How can a man who professes to have studied the ideas of the Zen about realization, entertain such doubts? It also remains "obviously unknown" to the author what exactly happened in the mind of Sri Ramana Maharshi

during his experience of death and it was not a mental will to die "but a sudden unexpected" spontaneous experience of death and what survived it.

The author's concluding remarks about detachment are very apt and to the point. "It is not a question of our letting such and such a thing go; it is a question of 'letting go'".

MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING (Anapanasati) :

Translated from the Pali by Bhikku Nanamoli, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, pp. 125, no price mentioned.

However excellent a translation may be it still gives room for some divergences from the original intended meaning. Pali is an exception since it has never been used outside the field of Theravada Buddhism. So its words have the linguistic distinction of being precise, according to the translator, who first of all collected the material from the Pali canon and its commentaries for his own use. His aim was to have a precise and condensed version omitting repetitions and yet preserving its pattern.

Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapanasati) is given great prominence in the Pali canon for mind training, connecting up the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. Pranayama (breath control) is used here as a stepping stone. First one gives attention to this meditation subject to counting. It should be remembered that respiration-mindfulness is a method of developing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and that this development consists of "the constant practice of properly directed mindfulness and clear comprehension in the order," concentration, insight, path-attainment.

There is a description of the states of the mind which hinder and those which help concentration and an analysis of the process of attaining full concentration and respiration-mindfulness with its 16 cases which is "of great fruit, of great benefit." The Blessed One said that Respiration-mindfulness developed and repeatedly practised fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness, these in turn developed and repeatedly practised fulfil the seven enlightenment factors, which developed and repeatedly practised perfect clear vision and deliverance.

This anthology is a valuable work by a distinguished Pali scholar and could take the place of a guide for those who follow this path.

LUCIA OSBORNE.

✓ THE COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: Edited by Arthur Osborne; Published by T. N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai—pp. 293. (for sale in India only); Price Rs. 6 (postage extra).

The present edition is a revised edition containing *Spiritual Instruction*, a work of Ramana Maharshi which was not included in the previous two editions.

Another important feature is the restoration of the pieces *Self Enquiry* and *Who Am I?*, which appeared in essay form in the earlier editions to their original form as dialogues between a master and his disciple.

The Maharshi was not a writer of books. He himself stated that it never occurred to him to write any book or compose poems. All compositions of his were at the request of his devotees. The only poems that came to him spontaneously and compelled composition were *Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala* and *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*, in Tamil.

His first work in Sanskrit, *Arunachala Pancharatnam*, composed without having studied the language was quite spontaneous and greatly admired by such an eminent Sanskrit scholar as Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni, who explained to him the features of the Arya metre, immediately before writing. Later when these verses were about to be printed the Maharshi himself translated them into Tamil at the request of a devotee.

A little reflection on the curious genesis of these compositions will enable one to evaluate the Maharshi's writings properly. They are not the productions of a pundit or a philosopher who has made a deep study of the subject from available materials. For the Maharshi left home in his sixteenth year without completing his schooling.

During his sojourn in Tiruvannamalai, he made no systematic study of our scriptures or of other philosophical works. Yet, he produced works in more than one language with unrivalled clarity and literary merit on the most abstruse aspects of Advaita Philosophy. They are subjects that defy even a scholar's attempt at expression in easily understood language.

The Maharshi was in a state of constant absorption in the Divine and whatever he spoke or wrote was in response to an enquiry by an earnest seeker after Truth. The knowledge that flowed through him was, therefore, of the nature of revealed knowledge, not different from the writings in the Upanishads. We will not be guilty of ex-

aggeration if we call all his productions *sacred works*.

In that context it is enough if the translation is free from misinterpretation; the present work is free of it.

The traditional method of acquiring knowledge from the writings of a Guru who has shed his human body is to invoke him with devotion and reverence before beginning to imbibe his teachings. For as the Maharshi said more than once, a Guru is none other than God Himself, who, out of compassion for the seeker, makes

use of a human form for transmission of grace. Such a method of approach will enable one to reach at least the fringe of his consciousness. The full import of his teachings will thereafter begin to unfold itself gradually into the consciousness of the seeker.

Therefore, to those who are attracted by the Maharshi's teachings and who are seeking practical guidance in the path, this book may easily assume the role of the Guru, to guide them to the goal.

SWAMI ANUANANDA.

Poetry

By Richard Clancy

THE poets are the main link externally between what are called the two worlds; the inner world that we know within us, and the external one that reaches us through our environment and the five senses. Our brothers of the human species are the many-tongued channel through which speaks the creative mind of God, or the Supreme Consciousness, according to whether viewed by one kind of believer or another. Of these voices the greatest and the most important are the poets, God's poets and prophets. It is in the nature of the human brain that words are its petty coinage, and these are the poet's tools more than anyone else's.

There is no road that does not lead from Thee,
O God.

The sumptuous flow of never-ending thought
That carves Thine image graven in our
minds,

This is the manna that falls from heaven
And feeds us in this body of light
Though clothed in matter for a term—

A term of years viewed now as days
But dayless in retrospect.

A stream of things remembered;

Of the scope of things forgotten

Black punctuated voids alone remain.

There was no sleep; no waking daily.

A stream unbroken except by the ripples
Of mind's activities in its eternal current,

Now deep and narrow, focussed and
concentrate;

Or wide and shallow, soft sandy-bottomed

And moving with the surface below the
streaming waters

With no impression, here and there without
a stone or pebble,

Curved, bent, and fish-peopled.

All waters flow unceasingly from the source to
the Sea's depths,

By vapours which are channels back to the
solitary mounts—

Early snows, winter rains, spring showers, and
the summer's sun.

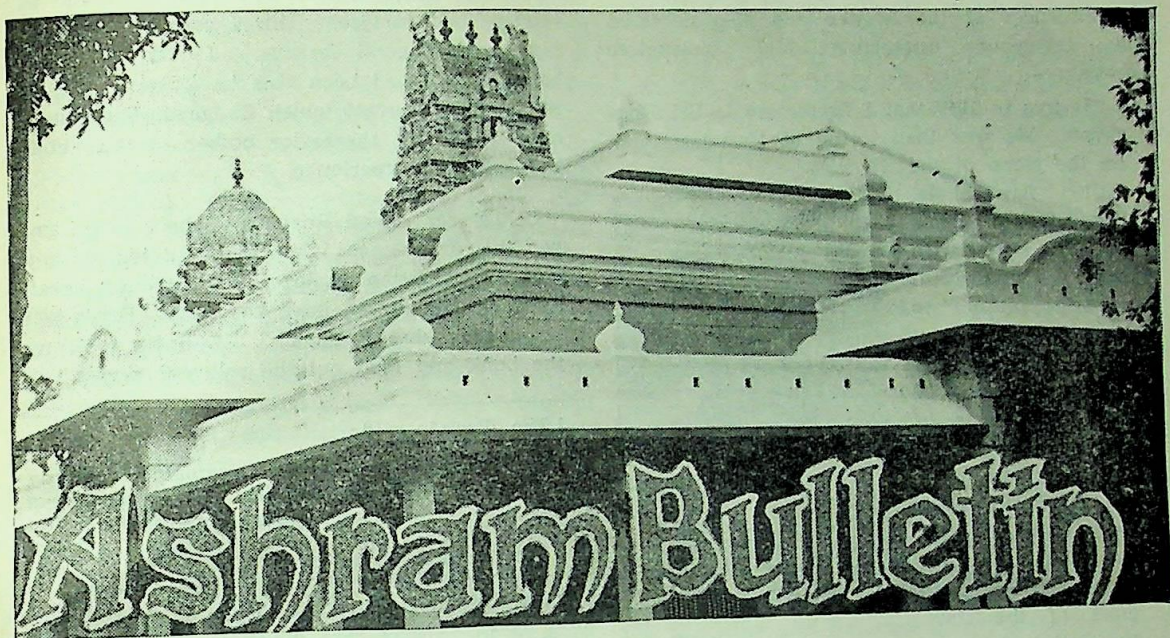
Lend us this frame festooned with centuries
That we may know the joys of building,
contriving, compounding and creating.

And may this moving spot contain within
The image of all that has been and may be.

To be in all within this spot of nowness;
Beyond the borderless stretch of being.

No tree, no plant, no rock or stone, but
moulded,

And contrived with love of Thee and beingness.
All this are we, all is within.

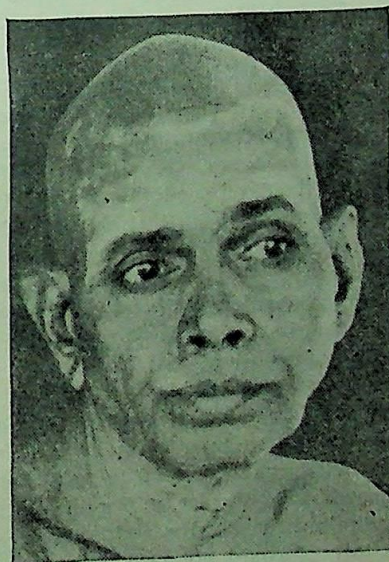


'EVER BE THE SELF'

Sri Bhagavan quotes Kaivalya Navaneeta

THE RAMANA SATSANG gatherings in the New Hall of the Ashram continue to be a regular and useful feature. These gatherings are held on Sunday evenings and sometimes, in special cases, on other days also.

Among the speakers who participated were Sri Purisai Murugesu Mudaliar who spoke on two Tamil Saints—Appudhi Adigal and Gowri Ammaiyar—on March 23rd and 24th; Mrs. Lucy Cornelissen our German devotee, spoke on the 'Leela of Arunachala' on March 31st; Smt. Suri Nagamma read from her recorded 'Talks' in Telugu on some most interesting anecdotes and events from Sri Bhagavan's life (April 14 & 21); two Jain nuns, belonging to Therapanthi sect, Sadhvi Pattuji and Sadhvi Naginanjli, spoke on Guru Bhakti and spiritual life on May 5. They are the disciples of Acharya Tulsi, founder of 'Anuvrata' movement. On the 9th June, Sri Srinivasan, Principal, Govt. Arts College, Tiruvannamalai, gave a good account of his spiritual experiences and how Sri Bhagavan continues to help yearning souls. Sri Somasundaram Pillai spoke on two Sundays and subsequently his daughter Smt. Pankajam on a Sunday, how they were drawn to Sri Bhagavan most dramatically

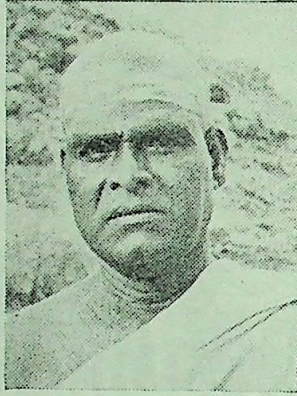


and how He influenced and continues to influence everyone in their family.

Among these weekly participators was Sri Kunju Swami (for an introduction of whom see our issue for April 1966, p. 217) one of the early

attendant-devotees of Sri Bhagavan, who gave his reminiscences of the Master and also narrated the following interesting and instructive account:—

"It was in 1919 that I first came to Sri Bhagavan. He was then living at Skandasramam on the slope of the Hill Arunachala. His mother and brother lived with him. Palaniswami used to attend to his few personal wants. Plague had driven away most of the inhabitants of the town and consequently visitors to Sri Bhagavan were very few. I was, therefore, left alone with Sri Bhagavan most of the time.



Sri Kunju Swami

He used to look at me and his eyes had, as is well-known, a strange brilliance and fascination in them. When I had looked into his eyes for some time I saw a bright effulgence. I could not say whence it came but it had the effect of making me forget everything. It was not like sleep for I was fully aware. I was also filled with a strange peace and bliss. I came back to myself with a shudder after some time. This experience occurred again and again—during all the seventeen days that I stayed with Bhagavan. I was like one intoxicated. I was absolutely indifferent to everything. I had no curiosity to see anything, no desire whatsoever. What I did I did most mechanically. I would have continued to live in this state if it had not occurred to me that it was not proper to partake of the food that was offered to Sri Bhagavan by his devotees without paying anything. I thought that he had initiated me into the experience of Brahman and that I had nothing more to gain by staying in his presence. I, therefore, returned to my native place and began to practise meditation in a room in my house all by myself. I could succeed to gain and retain that experience only for a few days; it started to diminish gradually and at last one day it was lost. I could not regain the experience. I decided to return to Sri Bhagavan. This I did, and a great good fortune awaited me when I came.

Palaniswami who was rendering personal service to Sri Bhagavan had to go on a journey

for some time. Before going he asked me to render such service. This I considered to be my greatest good fortune. I felt extremely happy that I had been able to do something in return for the grace which Bhagavan had shown me. I did not thereafter bother myself about the spiritual experience.

I, however, asked Bhagavan why I could not get the experience when I meditated in my house. Bhagavan said: "You have read *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, have you not? Don't you remember what it says?" And he took up the book and read out the relevant verses.¹

¹ The disciple said:

"Lord, you are the Reality remaining as my inmost Self, ruling me during all my countless incarnations! Glory to you who have put on an external form in order to instruct me! I do not see how I can repay your Grace for having liberated me. Glory! Glory to your holy feet!"

"The Master beamed on him as he spoke, drew him near and said very lovingly: 'To stay fixed in the Self, without the three kinds of obstacles obstructing your experience, is the highest return you can render me'.

"My Lord! Can such realisation as has transcended the dual perception of 'You' and 'I', and found the Self to be entire and all-pervading, fail me at any time?"

"The Master replied: 'The truth that I am Brahman is realised from the scriptures or by the Grace of the Master but it cannot be firm in the face of obstruction.'

"Ignorance, uncertainty and wrong knowledge are obstacles resulting from long-standing habits in the innumerable incarnations of the past which cause trouble and then the fruits of realisation slip away. Therefore root them out by hearing the Truth, reasoning and meditation.²

"Checked by incantations,³ fire will not scorch. Likewise defective realisation will not put an end to bondage. Therefore devote yourself to hearing the Truth, reasoning and meditation and root out ignorance, uncertainty and wrong knowledge.

"Ignorance veils the Truth that the Self is Brahman and shows forth multiplicity instead; uncertainty is the confusion resulting from lack of firm faith in the words of the Master; the illusion that the evanescent world is a reality and that the body is the self is wrong knowledge. So say the sages.

"Hearing the Truth is to revert the mind repeatedly to the teaching: 'That thou art'. Reasoning is rational investigation of the meaning of the text, as already heard. Meditation is one-pointedness of mind.

"If every day you do these, you will surely gain liberation.

"The practice must be kept up so long as the sense of knower and knowledge persists. No

² *Śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana.*

³ *Sthambhana.*

Sri Bhagavan then explained to me at great length the purport of these verses. They relate to the doubt raised by the disciple about the need to continue spiritual practices even after one has had the supreme experience. The disciple asks what he should do in return for the Guru's grace which had enabled him to obtain the highest experience. The Guru replies that if he continued to abide in the supreme state always that would be sufficient reward. The disciple wonders whether the spiritual experience once gained could be lost. The Guru says that it would be until he took care to practise *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*, that is hearing from the Guru the Truth, reflecting over it and assimilating it. The experience would occur in the presence of the Guru, but it would not last. Doubts would arise again and again and in order to clear them the disciple should continue to study, think and practise. These would be done until the dis-

tinguishing of the knower, the object of knowledge and the act of knowing no longer arise. In view of Sri Bhagavan's explanation I decided to stay always by Bhagavan's side and to practise *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*."

BRAHMANIRVANA CELEBRATIONS

At the Ashram

The 18th Aradhana or anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's Brahma-Nirvana was performed on the 25th April, in the midst of a large gathering of devotees from all over India.

The function commenced at 7 a.m. with the chanting of 'Arunachala Sthuthi' and 'Ramana Sadguru Sthuthi'. This was followed by the chanting of the Taittareya and Mahanarayana Upanishads, the Rudra, the Chamaka, the Purushasuktha etc. Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam and Sahasranama Archana were performed as usual. At the *Arthi* time the devotees felt the Bliss and Presence of Sri Maharshi and a very happy atmosphere prevailed throughout.

effort is necessary thereafter. Remaining as pure, eternal consciousness untainted like the ether and thus liberated while alive, one will live for ever as *THAT*, after being disembodied also."

Kaivalya Navaneeta, Section I, Verses 86 to 93.

Important persons who attended the function included: Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia of New



ARADHANA CELEBRATIONS AT BOMBAY: Function held on May 18, 1968 at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay to celebrate the 18th Anniversary of the Brahmanirvana of Sri Bhagavan. From left are: M/s. Jamnadas Ladiwala, Harikishandas Aggarwal; the Minister, Bhanushankar Yagnik; Sahukar, Swami Rasajnananda and Smt. Mani Sahukar.

Delhi, Sri H. C. Khanna and K. C. Khanna and family from Kanpur, Major I. J. Taneja from Hyderabad, Mr. George Oakenfold from England, Mrs. Roda MacIver from Bombay, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, K. K. Nambiar, K. Gopala Rao and A. R. Narayana Rao's family from Madras and Smt. Suri Nagamma from Vijayawada. Messages of good wishes were received from ministers and other officials. There was feeding of the poor on a large scale. In the afternoon there was a *Hari Katha* by Bangalore Sri Krishna Bhagavathar on Sri Kanakadasa. There was also a *bhajan* in the night by Brahmasri Jagadeesa Iyer and party.

Delhi

Gurupuja was celebrated on April 21 in the Satsang Hall of the Sarojini Nagar Vinayak Mandir.

After Vedaparayana and devotional music, Shri M. L. Sondhi, M.P., spoke on the special significance of Shiva Mrityunjaya and of His association with the Himalayas in the North and with Arunachala in the South, especially after the advent of Shri Ramana Maharshi, the highest embodiment of transcendental awareness in the modern world.

Madras

Gurupuja was celebrated on Sunday, April 28th, with the usual Vedaparayana, devotional music, etc. The principal speaker was Sri N. Subrahmanyam ("Anna") who presented the life and philosophy of Bhagavan as a clear, contemporary manifestation of *advaita vedanta*.

The Sabha meets every Sunday at 5 p.m. at Dharmalayam, 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet, Madras-18.

Kolar

The 18th Aradhana of the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated by the Sri Sankara Seva Sangh, Kolar, Mysore State. There was a special puja in the morning at the shrine of Sri Sankara in the Sankaralaya. In the evening there was a 'satsang' when Sri K. Pattabhiraman, Advocate, spoke on Bhagavan's mission.

Poona

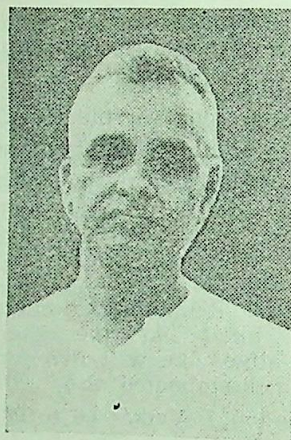
The Mahanirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated by Sri Bhau Saheb Y. N. Athavale at his residence in Poona in a fitting manner in the midst of a large gathering of local devotees. Prof. K. V. Belsare spoke about Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings.

Palghat

The Prem Sangh, Palghat, celebrated the Aradhana of Sri Bhagavan with puja, Upanishad and Gita parayanas, Sahasranama archana, bhajans and Arati. Smt. Kamala Murti gave a *Hari Katha* performance on Guru Bhakti. Lakshmi Ammal, a well-known Vedantin of Madras, attended the function.

VISITORS

Sri Champaklal and party of Bombay, who had visited the Ashram earlier in August, 1966 (see *Ashram Bulletin*, Oct. '66) came for a second and short stay in the course of which they performed a bhajan in the Old Hall. It was highly appreciated.



Sri Champaklal

for July, 1964), visited the Ashram and spent ten days here. They also performed bhajans, most of the songs of which were composed by the late Dr. Padmanabhan, the founder of Prem Sangh.

Major Taneja, who is employed in Secunderabad, and who is a regular visitor-devotee every year, spent his annual holidays at the Ashram, as usual. He daily went round the Hill and he is convinced that Arunachala-Ramana is vibrantly and potently felt in the Ashram. His account of how he came to Bhagavan, which is very interesting, will be published in a later issue. We are very happy to have amidst us such sincere



Major Taneja

sadhaks like Major Taneja, who devote their time entirely for sadhana and for nothing else.

RAMANA KENDRA

On Sunday, May 16th, the Kendra celebrated Matru-bhuteswara-puja at C-I-5, Tilak Marg.

After Veda parayana, silent meditation and devotional music, Shri A. K. Iyer spoke in Hindi on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. The significance of "Mother's Day" was explained by Sri K. Swaminathan as part of Bhagavan's profoundly simple and universally acceptable message. Beauty is the common meaning behind Sundara, Alagu and Ramana, but how few recognize this identity of father, mother and child or the splendour and the wonder hidden in our familiar human lives and relationships. The secret revealed by Bhagavan is the open secret known

to all but forgotten by most. And Bhagavan himself is, like the sun, obscured by the abundance and normality of his light.

Shri V. G. Ramachandran congratulated the Kendra on being a "movement" rather than a centre and taking the message to various parts of Delhi.

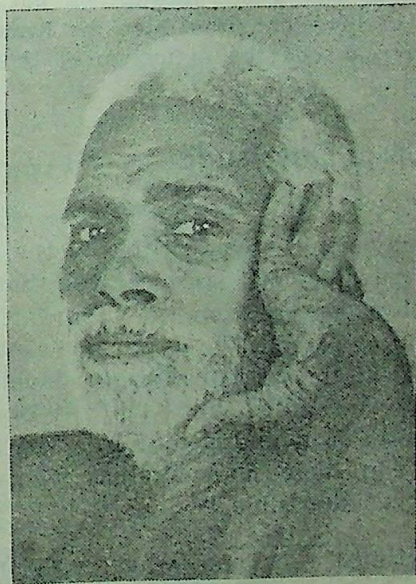
At the Annual Meeting held on March 3rd, Shri Morarji Desai was elected President of the Kendra, and Shri Ramdhari Sinha Dinkar and Shri M. L. Sondhi, M.P., Vice-Presidents. Dr. C. Ramaswamy is the new Treasurer, with Shri C. G. Balasubramaniam as Jt. Treasurer. Shri K. Swaminathan continues as Secretary and Shri K. C. Subbiah as Jt. Secretary.

INTRODUCING.....

G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA an educationist, professor and poet is one of the older devotees whose approach to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was exceptionally spontaneous. It was a pleasure to listen to their talk so free of constraint. There were some who trembled before Sri Bhagavan when speaking to Him. Such was His majesty.

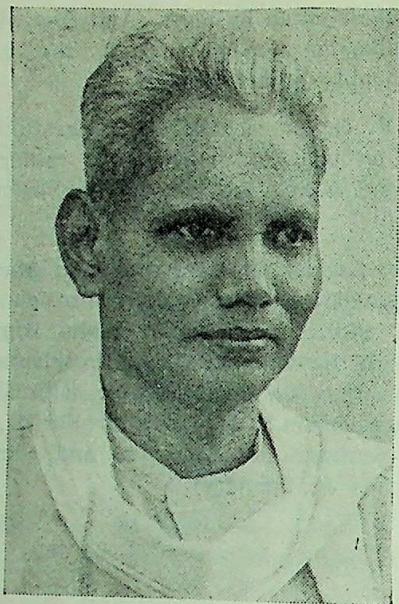
The "stars" or predominant influences in his life before the advent of Sri Bhagavan were his ancestors and nearest relatives; his mother about whom he speaks in terms of highest praise and whose presence to-day is his greatest blessing particularly after the death of his beloved wife, Sundaramma, who was for him the ideal of womanhood, a paragon of virtues so far advanced spiritually that her example deeply influenced and inspired his own spiritual life.



The turning point and the greatest influence was of course the coming into his life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Let's quote what he himself has to say about it: "The pole star of my life is of course my gurudev Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. At a time of distress in 1933 I was drawn to Him and the very first darshan plunged me into the ocean of peace and bliss. Ever since He has been the light of my life. He is my mother, father, guru and goal. He is my all-in-all; and in Him my little self and all its moorings were consummated and sublimated. In

a word He is the embodiment of grace. At every step in the least incidents of my life I have come to feel with a growing consciousness the guiding hand of that Divine Grace that is Sri Ramana."

G. V. Subbaramayya has recorded in his *Ramana Reminiscences* how a sthitaprajna or Jnani like Sri Bhagavan appears to react to the happenings of the relative world of phenomena that we see and experience and how a Jnani could



G. V. Subbaramayya



Ten days before Mahasamadhi

appreciate love and devotion such as G. V. Subbaramayya evinced towards Sri Bhagavan. "Self-realization", Sri Bhagavan used to tell his devotees "is not a new acquisition but only a removal of the clouds that hide the Reality that we always are by the extinction of the super-

imposed non-real ego, that makes us see and experience diversity in the one Universal Self, through the process of Self-enquiry."

A few days before the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan, G. V. Subbaramayya together with another of the early devotees, Narayana Iyer, (introduced to our readers in Jan. '68 issue, p. 83) went to see Sri Bhagavan and implored Him for grace; "Bhagavan, Abhayam yeevala" (Bhagavan, you must give me protection) and quick came the reply "Yichanu" (I have given it)!

Cry of a Destitute

By "Vishnu"

One day when I was sitting by the side of Sri Bhagavan, I felt so miserable that I put the following question to him: "Is the sankalpa (wish) of the Jnani not capable of warding off the destinies of the devotees?"

Bhagavan smiled and said: "Does the Jnani have a sankalpa at all? The Jivan-mukta can have no sankalpas whatsoever. It is just impossible."

I continued: "Then, what is the fate of all of us who pray to you to have grace on us and save us? Will we not be benefited or saved by sitting in front of you or coming to you? What use is there then for family men like me to gain by coming here to you?"

Bhagavan turned graciously to me and said: "Just as a trouble (or arrow) that comes to destroy the head goes away carry-

ing with it only the turban, so a person's bad karma will be considerably reduced while he is in the presence of a Jnani. A Jnani has no sankalpa but his *sannidhi* (Presence) is the most powerful force. He need not have sankalpa but his presiding presence, the most powerful force, can do wonders, save souls, give peace of mind, even liberation to ripe souls. Your prayers are not answered by him but absorbed by his presence. His presence saves you, wards off the karma and gives you the boons as the case may be, involuntarily. The Jnani does save the devotees, but not by sankalpa, which is non-existent in him, only through his presiding presence, *sannidhi*."

I was filled with joy. Even today his presence is the most powerful thing and that alone, I am confident, saves me!

SRI RAMANA MANTAPA NIDHI,

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

Receipts and Payments Account for the period from 1956 to 31-12-1967

RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS*			
	Rs.	P.			Rs.	P.	Rs. P.
To Athayam — Interest			5,859	73	By Mantapa Nidhi Expenses:		
To Donations — Mantapa Nidhi					Cost of Stones	11,139	40
General	1,65,575	70			Wages for stone workers	1,09,070	13
Book Depot	15,000	00			Polishing charges	15,136	05
The Mountain Path	5,000	00			Sundry expenses	28,661	04
			1,85,575	70	Supervision charges	1,165	00
To Kumbabhishekam:					Vimanam workers	24,679	90
Donations	27,533	04					1,89,851 52
Pictorial Souvenir	21,204	72			By Kumbabhishekam Expenses		42,901 11
			48,737	76	By Book Depot A/c.		4,637 31
					By Closing Balances:		
					On hand	208	47
					Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd.,		
					S.B. A/c.	146	92
					State Bank of India —		
					Current A/c.	2,427	86
							2,783 25
Total			2,40,173	19	Total		2,40,173 19

* Payments are inclusive of
 (1) Renovation and painting of Gopuram and Vimanam, and Kumbhabhishekam of Sri Mathrubhuteswara Shrine; and
 (2) Construction and consecration of Sri Chinnaswami's Samadhi.

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1967

LIABILITIES				ASSETS			
	Rs.	P.	Rs. P.		Rs.	P.	Rs. P.
GENERAL RESERVE:				ASSETS—			
Donations for Mantapa Nidhi	1,85,575	70		Sri Ramana Mantapam			1,89,851 52
Add: Athayam	5,859	73		BOOK DEPOT A/c.			4,637 31
Surplus from Kumbabhishekam A/c.	5,836	65		CASH & OTHER BALANCES:			
			1,97,272 08	On hand	208	47	
				Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd.,			
				S.B. A/c.	146	92	
				State Bank of India—			
				Current A/c.	2,427	86	
							2,783 25
Total			1,97,272 08	Total			1,97,272 08

Examined and found correct.
 (Sd.) J. SRINIVASAN,
 Chartered Accountant.

(Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
 President,
 1-7-1968

BANGALORE.
 Dated: 26th June, 1968.

The Traveller

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

The traveller touches his goal when he turns empty-minded,
 Forgetful even of the very goal of his seeking
 Oblivious of way and purpose towards such self-oblivion
 As in which ultimately stand obliterated
 All codes, all roads, all standards of comprehension,
 Preconception, prejudice ; all sense of both mileage and measurement
 Cancelled completely — memory of by gone, present and future ;
 Sense of ancestors, contemporaries, unborn generations ;
 Of prayer, of worship of ecstatic genuflection,
 Of saint and sinner, of poet and politician.
 Of cities and portals creating on vanishing hinges,
 Of cradles, cremations ; of abstinence, prostitution,
 Of account ledger and Koran and Bible and Gita,
 Of hoary cults and modernest superstitions,
 Of standstill techniques and staggering proud inventions,
 Of beloveds and rivals, of comrades and antagonists.....
 The traveller reaches his Destination only when destination
 Vanishes into distances, dissolving mirages
 Immeasurably close, without immeasurably distant
 Embodied in traveller-trance, invisibly enveloped,
 Beyond relationship — beyond being born, beyond dying.
 The traveller reaches his goal when he turns empty-minded
 Oblivious even on his quest, of both travel and traveller.

Certainly

By G. N. Daley

Involvement in *any* kind of activity is karma. Karma is ego and ego is Path. Why lengthen the Path by being attached to activity, concepts and possessions ? The feeling that 'this is mine', 'I do this', 'I feel this' and 'I think this' impels one to possess more, to do more, to feel more and to think more. This is time, endless Godless anarchy. Stop the mechanism, get out and JUST BE. This is NOW, eternal harmonising Love.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS both Indian and Overseas

Our quarterly journal was inaugurated in 1964 with the willing co-operation of several honorary workers, and considering that its aim is to disseminate Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's message, along with other genuine spiritual teachings, we fixed the subscription rates at the minimum possible, viz., (original rate) Indian — Rs. 5.00 ; Foreign — Sterling £ 0-10-0 or U.S. \$ 1.50.

Being a quarterly, our journal cannot claim the special postal concessions available to monthly journals and periodicals issued at more frequent intervals.

Since 1964, there has been a steady rise in the cost of paper, materials and printing charges ; and the postal charges have been steeply increased twice. The devaluation of the British Pound, soon following the devaluation of the Indian Rupee has further added to our costs. We are, therefore, unwillingly compelled to REVISE the subscription rates, as follows : effective from January 1969 for renewals and new enrolments :

Annual :	INLAND :	Rs. 6.00 ;	FOREIGN :	Sterling £ 0-12-6 or U.S. \$ 1.50
Per copy :	„	Rs. 1.75 ;	„	„ £ 0- 3-6 or 45 cents
Life :	„	Rs. 125/- ;	„	„ £ 12-10-0 or U.S. \$30.00

The rates for the U.S. Dollars remain unchanged.

The above are rates for despatch by surface mail and by unregistered book-post ONLY.

Registration : Rates for sending the journal by registered post are :

Indian — Rs. 3.00 ; Foreign — 4 sh. or 50 cents.

AIR MAIL SURCHARGE :

	Rs.	£	\$
(1) Nepal, Pakistan, Ceylon	6.80
(2) Aden, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Phillipines	..	15 sh.	1.80
(3) Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, U.K., Greece, Israel, Italy, Monaco, East, South and West Africa, Switzerland	..	22 sh.	2.70
(4) Australia, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden	..	30 sh.	3.60
(5) North, Central and South America, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand	..	37 sh.	4.50

INSEEING AND OUTSEEING

By
WEI WU WEI

Sri Ramana Maharshi is sometimes described as a great Vedantic saint. That no doubt is true, but is it not rather like describing the Ocean as the Bay of Bengal? Of course he is called Bhagavan also, by his devotees, but did he not say "There is no Bhagavan outside yourself"? That is, perhaps, one of his great statements, those in which he said in half-a-dozen words everything that can be said in relative language. So the Ocean simile will not 'hold water', for if it applied it would require that we should be 'Land', and thereby separate from what he is. In fact only one simile is applicable, only one will hold both the Maharshi and Bhagavan, and that one is Light, for then we are 'darkness', and there is no such thing as darkness, for 'darkness' is only apparent absence of light.

With Light there is no darkness, for light is universal, and what Sri Ramana Maharshi represented conflicts with no true teaching in any part of the world or at any period of suppositional 'time'. Bondage to any specific denomination, or to any particular manifestation representing a 'faith', may obscure this fact to the blindfold, but whoever can free himself will find the light represented by Bhagavan shining also in his own vision.

His own way of seeing, be it traditional or otherwise, may suit him better, but he cannot fail to benefit by this simple and direct teaching via a Sage of our own times,

whose words were recorded by our contemporaries and are accurately reported in our own tongues. To anyone who has had to deal all his life with scholarly translations from ancient languages, by specialists who understood nearly everything in question except the meaning of what they were translating, the words of a contemporary Sage are precious indeed.

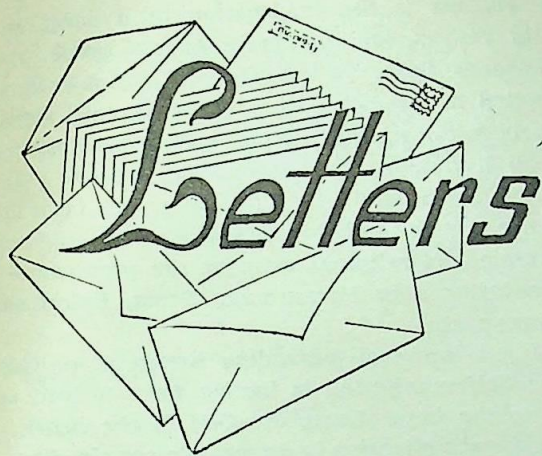
It would be a mistake, however, to oversimplify the situation. In the first place the Maharshi in his manifestation — or Bhagavan via that manifestation — taught much by 'silence' or in the form of what has been called 'grace', and in the second place he spoke to each devotee according to his degree of understanding, which means that to some he spoke as directly from pure noumenality as relative language permits, while to others he replied to questions in a perfectly dualistic context. Two such answers to a similar question are often contradictory, as they must necessarily be, for undivided mind needs no concepts, cognition is absolute and not relative, so that what relatively appears to be incomprehensible absolutely may be apperceived as the truth, and what absolutely is truth appears relatively as incomprehensible.

To whoever has apperceived what the difference is — there is no longer any 'difference'. It is only when you don't know the difference that the apparent 'difference' appears.

..... IT HAPPEN

By L. P. Yandell

What a difference between 'make' and 'let'!
In 'make' the arrow can miss the target;
In 'let' the target comes to meet the arrow.



to the EDITOR

APRIL 1968

Greetings! Happy to hear from Jacqueline and Yvonne (see *Ashram Bulletin* of April '68), who I am glad to learn, found the most understanding friends in our Ashram. How homesick I got for the Ashram; just wish I could be there also! So also I am interested to read the various accounts of the visitors about their stay in the Ashram in *The Mountain Path*, which we carry in our public Library and there are quite a few devotees here in Santa Barbara who are devoted to Bhagavan. Hope sooner or later I will find another opportunity to come to Ramanasramam and stay for a longer time. I am still teaching at the Japanese Buddhist Church; an activity I enjoy.

WILHELM H. EITEL,
Santa Barbara, California, USA.

(2)

Last year a friend gave me a yearly subscription to *The Mountain Path*. I was simply delighted. My only wish is that I had known of its existence sooner. It is by far the best religious periodical I have come across. It was there I read of your request for material pertaining to experiences with the Maharshi. Hence this small contribution. One of the things I particularly appreciate in *The Mountain Path* is the great variety of points of view expressed... yet allowing of no compromise with essentials. I also find the "Letters" section interesting, but especially your fine comments which are always extremely valuable to me, and most helpful. Do please give us more of them.

MAUD A. PIGGOTT,
California, U.S.A.

(3)

Each issue of the *Mountain Path* makes Maharshi more clear to me, and seems to draw me nearer to Him. Each article appears to have been written specially for me! And this is a sign of the success of *The Mountain Path*.

A. M. SAGANE,
Pandharkavda, Maharashtra.

(4)

This is my chance to say at the same time how important *The Mountain Path* is to us and how delighted we are when it arrives in our mailbox. Thank you for this unique magazine and its desperately necessary message.

ROBERT HURLEY,
Kyoto, Japan.

(5)

Thoughts in my mind have been suspended for some time after having read the poem "Silence and Sound" written by Walter De La Mare in the April issue. I am a dull student like a horse in the field of spiritual life. The traveller knocks the door irrespective of the absence of response. I find myself in the position of the traveller performing my duties towards God as designed by Him without any response, but with the positive hope that it will pave the way for solace for my soul later. Please do publish such poems in future also.

MADHAVI, Madras.

We publish good poems which we receive them
or when occasion arises.

EDITOR.

DIVINE EYES

Some months ago a friend passed on to me a photograph of Bhagavan, with no information, so I did not know who it was. Nevertheless, I was fascinated by the photograph and find myself meditating on it every night.

With no knowledge of the person whose photo I was observing, even his name, I found the eyes coming to life and stirring my soul. They seem to unify everything — bringing me into contact with all the universe in some mystical way.

I have never been so overwhelmed by a photograph and I feel that, in some way, the spirit of Bhagavan is captured by his pictures and transferred to his observers. He seems to be a focus on the eternal. Without ever having met Bhagavan, I can well believe that he was a fully enlightened human being, where the rest of us are fortunate to receive the grace of an instantaneous (timeless) "glimpse" of reality to give us perfect faith the rest of our days.

I hope that I shall be able to visit your ashram sometime in the future.

CHARLES D. HORING,
California, U.S.A.

Many have been moved by Sri Bhagavan's photographs as you have. We hope you will be able to visit our ashram. The best months are from October till the end of March with regard to climate.

EDITOR.

A JNANI AND AN AVATARA

What is the difference between a Jnani and an Avatara? You have written in your 'Incredible Sai Baba' how Sai Baba used to command the rain to stop or poison not to 'come up' or express his overt sankalpa on a hundred other occasions. Do you think he 'possessed' a mind, or that he was not a Jnani? And in case of Sri Satya Sai Baba who is believed to be a continuity of the Sai Incarnation, this sankalpa is always expressed. Sri Satya Sai Baba speaks of his sankalpa and creates a variety of objects from space as it were. I myself have experienced it and yet preserve a gift from him. Sri Maharshi has been reported to have said one who has any sankalpa is no Jnani. Would you like to account for the miracles performed by Sri Maharshi and Sri Sai Baba or Sri Satya Sai Baba?

B. K. MITRA,
Bhubaneshwar.

An Avatara is the incarnation of a deity, especially Vishnu, not always in human shape. In the puranas there is mention of a fish-avatara incarnated in this form to save the seventh Manu and progenitor of the human race from destruction by a deluge; a boar-avatara, Varaha; the man-lion Narasimha etc. The first five incarnations are purely mythological, in the next avatars the heroic and religious element are predominant as for instance in Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Dattatreya etc.

A Jnani is the all-pervading Brahman, or God or the Self manifested in human form to lead us back to the inner Guru, the Self in the heart.

If a Jnani's attention is drawn in a certain direction there is divine automatic activity out of compassion and a miracle might happen without any sankalpa. Miracles can be performed with or without sankalpas. As you yourself mention in your letter, according to what Sri Maharshi said, one who has any sankalpa is no Jnani. Sai Baba's miracles find a very good explanation in his own words: "I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them."

EDITOR.

RETENTION OF BREATH?

This is in continuation of my letter of Nov. 14th in which I stated that I had been experiencing glimpses of Bliss when I do kevala kumbhakam, that is absolute retention of breath. From the next day after posting that letter to you I have been experiencing a kind of burning sensation at the right side of my chest. At first it lasted a very short time without causing physical pain. The next day it spread like a wave or current up to the head and down to the feet. I felt this experience only during meditation. Since then the burning sensation has been present most of the day. Even in sleep I am aware of it. I am afraid where this practice will lead me. I request you earnestly to advise me whether it is the right experience that I am having.

P. SUBBARAO,
Khammam.

You did not tell me in your previous letter that you were practising kevala kumbhakam. Bhagavan did not encourage this and there is no one here who gives guidance that way. If you want to go that way you should find a guru who specialises in it and follow his guidance. It can be dangerous. It is safer to concentrate on the heart at the right side and practise Self-enquiry.

If you concentrate on stilling the mind the breathing will take care of itself and be appropriately stilled if and when necessary. If you start with the breathing the results may be more spectacular but are not so fundamental and may be harmful.

EDITOR.

'WHO AM I?'

When meditating "Who am I?" does one repeat it in repetition? Or does one repeat it a few times and remain silent for the rest of the time in meditation?

MRS. CICELY LAMBERT,
Sydney, Australia.

If someone should knock at your door in the middle of the night you would become one-pointed and ask with urgency "Who are you?" With even greater urgency and one-pointedness one should turn inwards and ask "Who am I?" You do not know who you really are. You want to know. The more determined you are to know the more alive becomes this quest. It should never be repeated mechanically. One can ask this question once or twice or thrice and then be aware or meditate or remain silent. If thoughts arise ask yourself "to whom?" and again "Who am I?" If persisted in this quest with all sincerity and one-pointedness after some time sooner or later there will be a response not in so many words. From the very depth of your being there will come a reply in a feeling of Self-awareness of Certainty. You will know.

EDITOR.

LOCKETS (Badges) OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

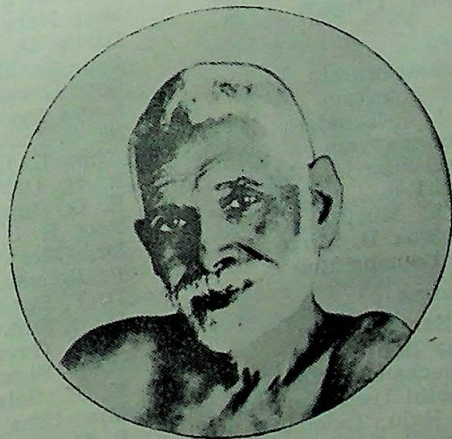
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On walking round Arunachala

By 'David'

Going round Arunachala is not unlike going to a church or temple; it should be done intelligently, aware of what we are doing. Bhagavan definitely assured us that there is inherent power in the Hill, which benefits us even if we do not believe in it, just as a fire warms you whether you know it is there or not; but it is better if we co-operate. There may also be siddhas, men of power, still living on the Hill, as there were in ancient times. Bhagavan said that in his day there were. There is an old man in town who says that he has encountered a living siddha on the Hill. He adds that we should walk round in a meditational mood, allowing thoughts to arise but remaining

alert and watching them, not getting carried away by them. Thus they enable us to see our present state. That is a sort of self-confession prior to self-cleansing. The divine power of Truth acting through Arunachala will help the cleansing. He adds that the process may have to go on for months or even years. The aspirant must strive to retain self-awareness and the Power will give him glimpses of Truth in its various aspects and thus encourage him on his path. Furthermore, the old man says that we should sit in meditation for half an hour immediately on our return from a walk round the Hill.

"Save me from the
cruel snares of fascinat-
ing women and honour
me with union with Thy-
self, Oh Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 20

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ॐ THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who
meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1.

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The Mountain Path

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is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Words

4. పాన్లుకు వేలూగ భూషణ ముందునే
తన్ను విడిచి తనువేది — తన్ను
తనువనువా డజ్జుడు తానను వాడు
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4. పొంతుకు బేగ్రుకప ప్రిడణ ముள்ளతో
తన్నే విడిத்துత్ తన్నువేది — తన్నేత్
తనువెంబా అంతురాని తానుకక గెలావూన్
నైయనిత్త రాని తని .

4. Does an ornament exist apart from the gold of which it is made? Where is the body apart from the Self? He who considers the body to be himself is an ignorant man. He who regards himself as the Self is the Enlightened One who has realised the Self.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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(A QUARTERLY)

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The aim of this Journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as revealed to by the saints and sages, and to clarify the path to seekers in the world of our modern world.

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Does an ornament exist apart from the gold of which it is made? What is the body apart from the Self? He who considers the body to be himself, the Self is the Enlightened One who has realized the Self.

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— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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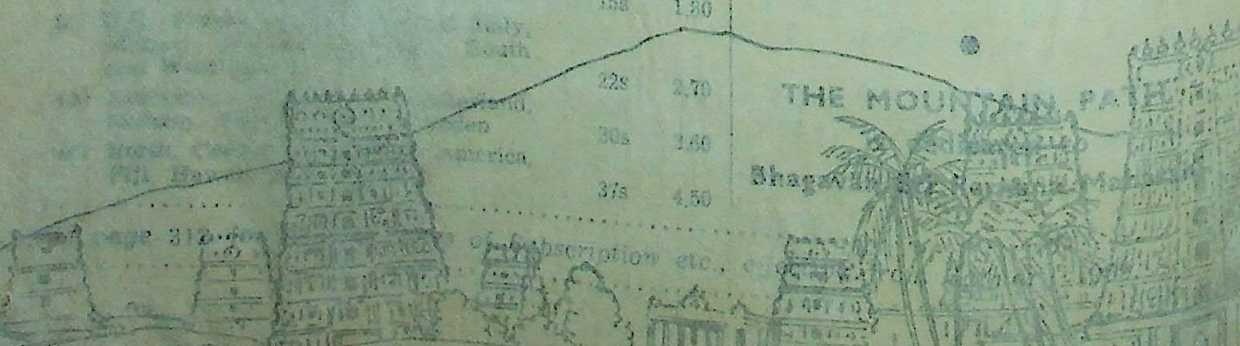
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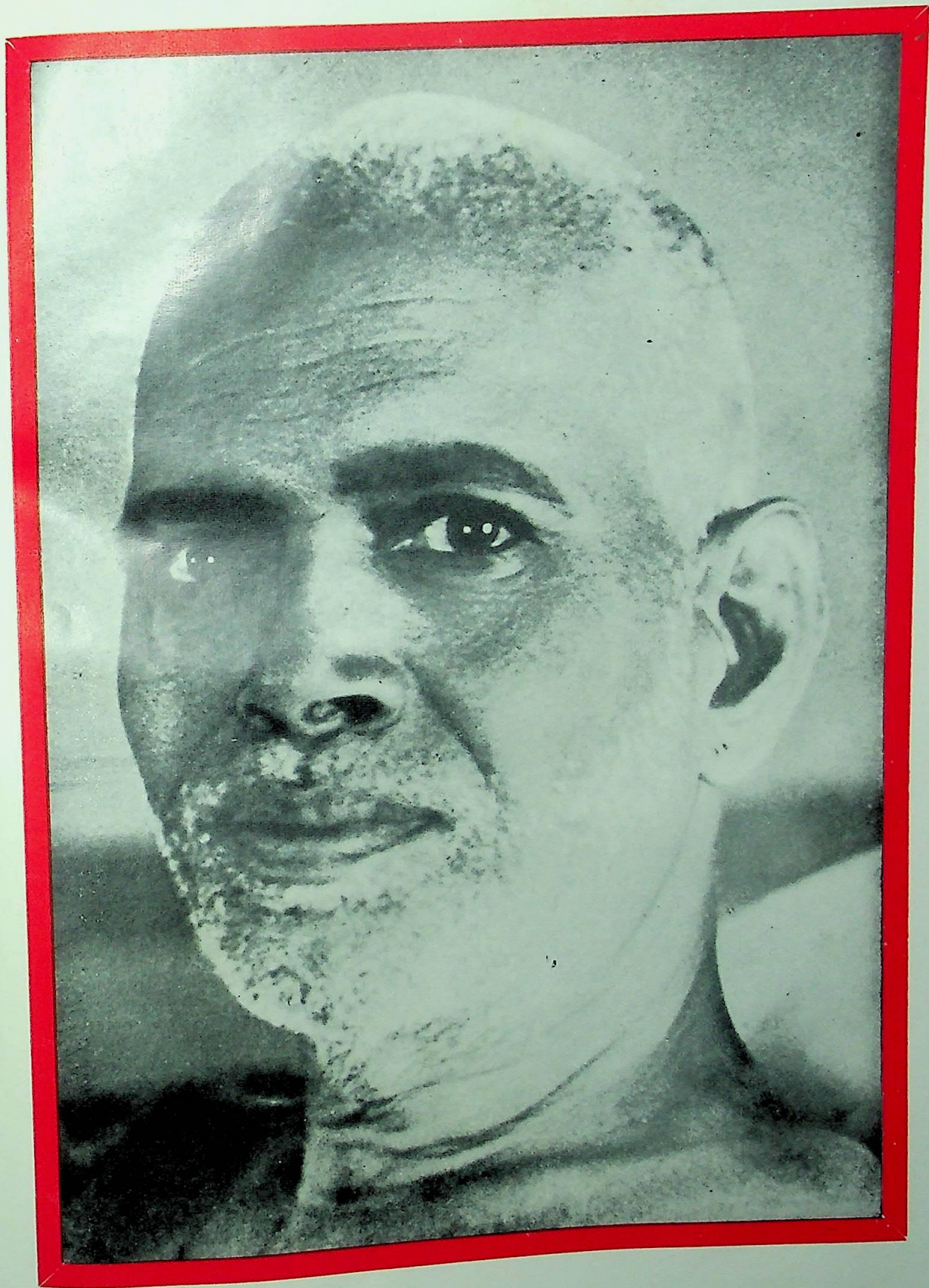
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi







THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

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SELF AND EGO

Editorial

WITH practice you can concentrate on being, just as you can on breathing or eating. And, as with breathing or eating, it does not mean thinking about it but consciously experiencing it. A stone can be unconsciously ; a man can too, but he can also consciously be.

When you feel this sense of being, this pure I-am, you find that it does not fall into any category ; it is neither yours nor not yours, it is neither divided from other people nor united with them ; it just is. And it is pure simple consciousness. You cannot say that you are conscious of it because there is no separate you to be conscious of it. You are it and it is you. And the experience is a very blissful one, free from all worries and sorrows. All this you recollect when looking back at it, because while it lasts you do not bother about such questions. In fact, on looking back you realize that while it lasted you were either not thinking at all or just seeing, hearing, cognizing, without this encroaching upon you, without being at all disturbed by it.

You can also feel yourself an individual being separate from all others, liking some and disliking others. No practice is needed for this because it is the way people usually do feel.

The first way of being is called the 'Self' and is to be meditated upon, the second is called the 'ego' and is to be rejected. Concentration on the heart at the right side is safest according to Sri Ramana Maharshi while concentration between the eyebrows may lead to visions and strengthening of the ego.

This does not mean that there are two selves or people in you but rather two ways of experiencing your being. The first is serene and happy, the second makes you vulnerable to anger, jealousy, frustration and all manner of suffering. Religions either tell you to reject the second, the ego, (as in Christ's saying that he who gives up his life for the sake of Christ — of the Spirit, the Self — shall find it, while he who seeks to save it shall lose it) or they say

that there really isn't one (as in the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta* — no-ego. It makes no practical difference which they say, because whether there is an ego or not there seems to be and it is this seeming self that has to be rejected.

Most people in the modern world live simply as the ego, not knowing of any other possibility. How did this state come about? A very young child has no ego-sense, the psychologists say (and Christ, it will be remembered, said that one must become like a little child in order to attain heaven). According to tradition, primordial man also had not. The rise of the ego-sense was marked by the differentiation into good and evil, and this brought about the 'fall' of man from the ego-free state called 'paradise' to the ego-ridden state of man in the world of strife and frustration.

A human being comes into the world with various faculties, including the mental faculty. Very early in life this mental faculty begins to find some of the reports made by the other faculties pleasant and others unpleasant and it builds itself up into a fictitious person constantly demanding the pleasant ones and rejecting or trying to reject the unpleasant. It is this fictitious person that is called 'the mind', and this is the same as the ego. When the Maharshi or any other spiritual Master says that the mind of the Realized Man is dead it does not mean that his mental faculty is in any way impaired. If he looks at a calendar he can tell the date like any one else. It only means that the mental faculty is no longer a 'mind' acting as ruler of the other faculties and indeed of life itself, planning the future, regretting the past, hoping, fearing, exulting.

The purpose of all spiritual teaching is to guide and encourage us to seek liberation from the ego and realization of the Self. The two are the same. To say that there is no ego or that it is an illusion or that the Self already is does not in any way absolve us from this obligation, because it is precisely from the illusion of an ego fostered by the

service we render it in every selfish thought, word and deed that we have to seek liberation. It is no use saying that there is not an ego and behaving as though there is, because actions speak louder than words. It is living as though there were an ego that prevents us from realizing that there is not and attaining liberation from it.

The question may arise: "Suppose I like the ego-state why shouldn't I be left at peace in it?" The answer is that you don't like it, nobody does; and it is the ego itself (or the illusion of one) which does not leave you at peace. Solomon listed 'A servant when he ruleth' as one of the great afflictions. The mental faculty is a servant; the mind makes itself the ruler. It is insatiable. However favourable one's circumstances, it always craves more — more pleasure, more admiration, more success; and it is eternally insecure, vulnerable to sickness, bereavement, old age, destitution and ultimately, unavoidably, to death. Yet even though plagued by this ego-self, even though frustrated and insecure and driven to consider even death as an escape from it how few have the clear light and the determination to renounce it! That is the perpetual mystery.

The next question may be: "How do I know that I shall be better off, less frustrated, more content, if I do reject the ego?" That who will? Who am I? The ego asks that question and likes to imagine himself engaging in a valiant war against himself and enjoying the rewards. The ego-free state is the natural state; it is what I by nature *am*. And it is the care-free and deathless state. One feels intuitively that it is so, and if empirical evidence also were needed it can be found in the lives of the Liberated. A Sage is immersed in bliss whether the apparent circumstances of his life, as seen by an outsider, seem propitious or not. What Sage has ever complained?

But are there also positive gains, some will ask. Who for? The faculties, set free from the tyrant mind, are able to grow naturally, no longer warped or stunted, no

longer shut off from the sunlight. And the mind, the usurper, gloats at the prospect of the gains that will accrue to him as a reward for his fictitious death and asks if there are positive gains. That is one of his strongest lines of defence and counter-attack.

Then if one does decide to abjure the seeming-self for the true, the question is: how is one to do it?

A useful introduction is to remember what has been explained here about the reality of the Self and unreality of the seeming self, that is the ego. It can never be more than an introduction, being merely mental, but still it is a useful one. Sri Krishna gave it to Arjuna first before speaking about the discipline of life he was to follow.

Next comes a discipline of life. This may well be to live each day as it comes on the assumption of the unreality of the individual self. That would imply cool, efficient,

impersonal activity such as Sri Krishna enjoins in the Gita, doing what is right because it is right, not for profit or pleasure. It does not follow, however, that there must be no profit or pleasure in life. A merchant naturally sells at a profit because that is his living; a married man naturally expects pleasure from his family life; only profit and pleasure should not override duty and become the dominating motives in life.

But even a life of disinterested activity is not normally enough to dissolve the ego-sense. It usually needs to be reinforced by a stronger and more forceful campaign. This can be either surrender or enquiry. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita enjoins surrender; Vasishta in the Yoga Vasishta enjoins Self-enquiry. The Maharshi said, when asked: "There are two ways, ask yourself 'Who am I?' or submit". The mind acts as though it were the ruler and owner of the faculties; it has to abdicate and surrender them and itself to pure Being or Self. Or it has to look inward and see what is the true Self or Being.

Tradition

By Arthur Osborne

Streaming back, streaming back, the long hair of the wind!
 Words spoken, songs sung, the glory-flung trail
 Of the light sweeping on!
 The sound of the Soundless loud-flapping the cloak
 Of the ages wherein the Timeless is robed!
 The echo of Silence caught by the heart
 Bursting out into song!
 In rhythmical measure the galaxies swirl
 Round Stillness eternal in dance ever new.

THE COLLABORATOR

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

IT is surprising how often the founder or renovator of a religion has been accompanied by a collaborator or companion, often a younger relative, sometimes the 'beloved disciple', who has in some way completed his work, whether the human or esoteric or institutional or some other aspect of it. It seems, in fact, to be the regular course of events.

Let us look first at the two historical Hindu Avatars, Rama and Krishna. Rama, like Christ, left behind no book, no body of teaching. That was done by his Guru, Vasishtha, in the *Yoga Vasishtha*, one of the most sublime of scriptures. Apart from this, his life, as a pattern of dharma, was itself his gospel. The *Ramayana*, the story of his life, is a story of perfect rectitude, perfect dharma. But a pattern of dharma is woven rather in relationship than alone, and we see Rama accompanied in exile, in war and in final victory by Sita, the perfect wife, Lakshman, the perfect brother, and Hanuman, the perfect servitor. None of these lacked character or became colourless through being perfect. It is a mistaken idea that weaknesses give character. They undermine it.

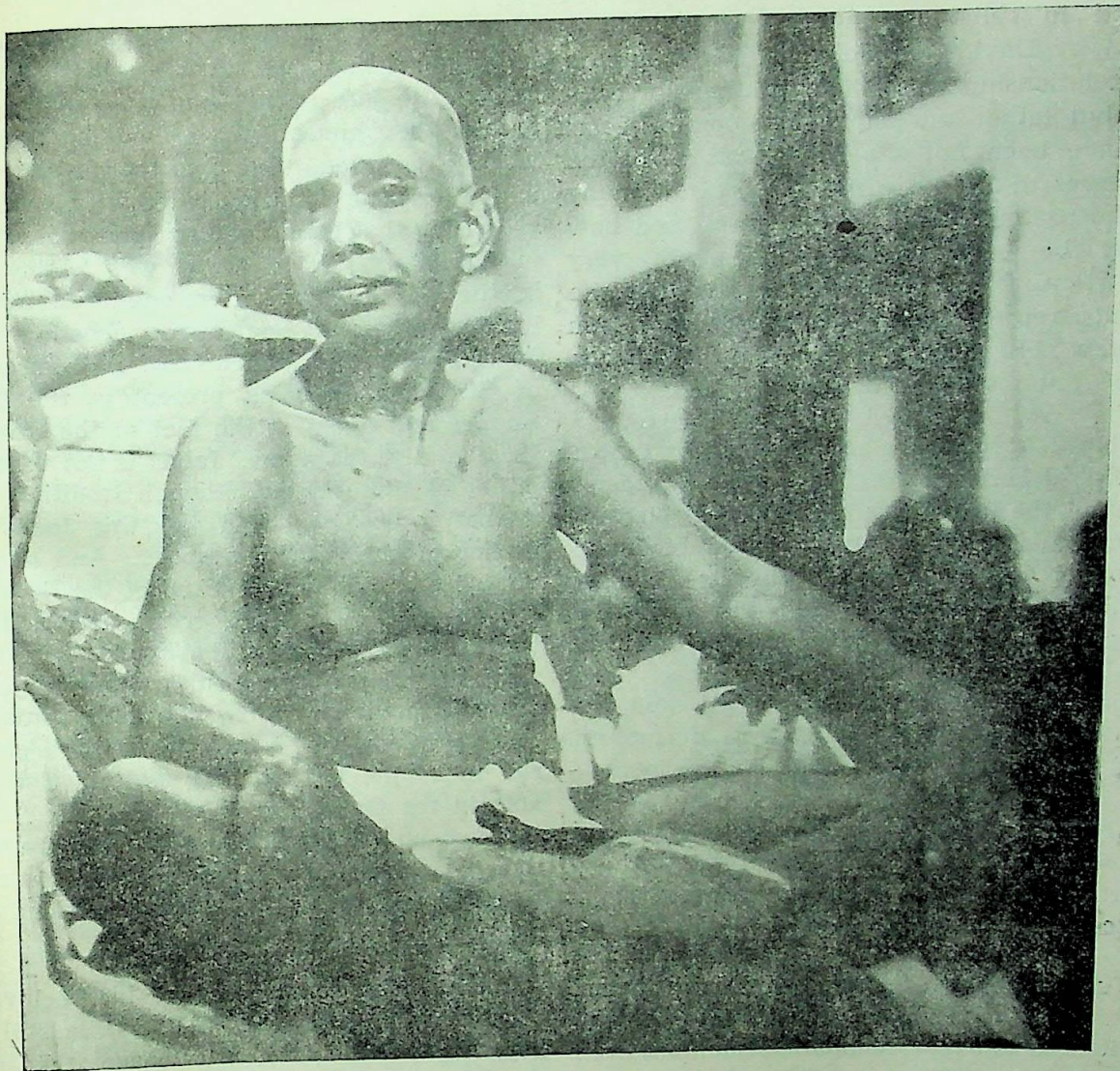
Of these three it is Lakshman who fills the role we are here considering. The younger brother of Rama, he voluntarily accompanied him into exile when Rama accepted his exclusion from the throne and departed for his fourteen year sojourn in the forests. Lakshman behaved towards him throughout with unswerving loyalty and to Sita with friendliness and devotion. It is the relationship of these three as well as the perfection of Rama in himself that provides the pattern of dharma in the *Ramayana*.

Krishna also was accompanied in the earlier part of his life by his brother, this time his elder brother, Balaram. They were

carried safely into exile together as infants, thus escaping the tyrant Kamsa who wanted to destroy them. They grew up as village lads together and returned and overthrew the tyrant together. Together also they assumed leadership of the Yadava tribe and became its defenders against outside enemies. They are depicted together in the various legendary (and symbolical) exploits of childhood and youth. Naturally, Krishna is always the leader, but Balaram is not by any means a pale shadow of him. He is depicted as massive where Krishna is nimble, simple where Krishna is adroit, and an uncompromising upholder of dharma. He is said to have been given to intoxication. In the symbolism of the various religions intoxication has stood for divine ecstasy. A number of the ancient texts refer to Krishna and Balaram jointly as the Avatar.

During the latter part of Krishna's life Balaram is less to the fore and it is rather of the 'beloved disciple' Arjuna that we hear, the disciple to whom the *Bhagavad Gita* was proclaimed. Indeed, Arjuna and Krishna are spoken of in some ancient texts as Nara and Narayana incarnate on earth, Nara being archetypal man and Narayana the Lord.

Now from Hinduism let us turn to its international offspring, Buddhism. Buddha is often depicted in iconography accompanied by his younger cousin, the beloved disciple Ananda. Ananda was far from being the most advanced of the disciples; in fact he is sometimes referred to as backward. As late as the death of Buddha he went aside and wept with chagrin because he had not yet attained Realization, although a number of the other disciples had. But he was the beloved disciple and devoted personal attendant of Buddha, and he himself was conspicuous for love and compassion. It is charac-



teristic that when the women disciples wanted permission to join the Sangha and feared to approach Buddha direct lest he should refuse, it was to Ananda that they went to plead their cause; characteristic too that his plea was successful.

The Semitic tradition is traced back to Abraham who rejected the corrupt polytheism of his community and restored a simple primitive monotheism. He was accompanied in this venture by his younger brother, Aaron. In the early part of his career, while prevailing upon Pharaoh to release the Hebrews from their slavery in Egypt, Moses was the dominating spiritual presence, Aaron his spokesman. Later, when

founding a Hebrew religious community, Aaron was at the head of the priesthood and ritual. This does not mean that Moses was the temporal and Aaron the spiritual head of the community, for if that had been so Aaron would have stood higher. In tradition and in truth the spiritual authority is above the temporal power, which is, or should be, its outer instrument. Moses was the supreme authority, both spiritual and temporal, with Aaron simply as head of the spiritual organization.

The next stage in the decline towards modernism in the Hebrew tradition was the institution of kingship politically and of the devotional type of worship that Hindus call

bhakti in religion; and this was brought about by David and Solomon. In this case the relationship was not of brothers or cousins but father and son: and Solomon seems to have been not the collaborator but the successor of David in his work. How many of the psalms David wrote himself and how many he collected is perhaps not very important; the important thing is that the psalms represent the 'bhakti' element in Hebrew religion and that it was David who both epitomised and established this.

Bhakti is naturally accompanied by tantra. If David introduced the Psalms Solomon brought the Proverbs; if David projected the Temple as the devotional centre of Israel, Solomon actually built it, with its elaborate symbolism. He would seem to have introduced into Judaeism the highly technical and symbolical type of religious approach such as is known in India as Tantrism and was known in the Mediaeval West as Hermetism. And indeed, Near East traditions perpetuated in the Quran represent him as the supreme master of occult knowledge and powers, while Western traditions such as Hermetism, astrology and free masonry claim descent from him.

Just as the Quran refers to Abraham and Lot, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, so it does to Jesus and John, sometimes even representing them as Prophets together, while not even mentioning any of the other apostles. In Mediaeval Christendom the esoteric or mystical Church was referred to as the 'Church of St. John' in contrast to the exoteric 'Church of St. Peter'. One of the symbolical supports for this is the fact that St. John alone of the apostles was at the foot of the cross during the crucifixion and that Jesus, from the Cross, bade his mother, who was also there, regard John as her son and bade John regard her as his mother; and it is stated that she lived thereafter in the house of John. Mary is taken to symbolise Divine Grace and John's house the Mystic Church.

But who is this John? The cousin of Jesus became John the Baptist. He perform-

ed the necessary function of giving Jesus the initiation of baptism, while speaking of himself as the fore runner and of Jesus as one greater than himself, whose shoe he was not worthy to fasten. But then he was arrested and after some time executed by Herod for criticising that tyrant and so appears no more in the story. Then there was 'John the brother of James' who was one of the apostles. But was he the same as the 'apostle whom Jesus loved' who is mentioned in the Gospel of St. John as being present at the Last Supper and again at the foot of the Cross? Incidentally, the name 'John' is not used in either of these cases, although tradition has it that it was he. And was this John the author of the Fourth Gospel? And of the 'Epistles of St. John'? And of the Book of Revelations? Linguistic critics declare that the Fourth Gospel and the Book of Revelations show too diverse a cultural and linguistic equipment to be by the same author. Some have even held that the 'John' referred to as the head of the esoteric Church and, in the Quran, as a Prophet with Jesus is a composite character, a function rather than a person, like 'Melchisedec' in the Epistle to the Hebrews. These questions do not concern us here.

Coming next to Mohammed, his 'beloved disciple' was his nephew Ali. While still a boy, Ali was the first male to accept Islam, being preceded only by Mohammed's wife Khadija. When Mohammed had to flee from Mecca it was the still youthful Ali who took his place in bed to delay discovery of his absence. Come to maturity, Ali was given the Prophet's daughter Fatima in marriage, and all 'Syeds' or lineal descendents of Mohammed spring from this marriage. He was one of the redoubtable champions of the early Muslims in war and earned the name 'Lion of Islam'. More important, he is regarded as the repository of Islamic mysticism, and most of the Sufi initiatic orders trace their descent through him. Indeed, he has been represented as the epitome of sainthood, as Mohammed is of prophethood. The Shi'as hold that Ali ought to have been accepted as first caliph and head of Islam after the death of Mohammed and that the

caliphate should have been hereditary in his family. The Sunnis (that is the orthodox Muslims, among whom all the sufi orders are included) reject this claim, which indeed Ali himself never made, but they still regard him with peculiar veneration.

It is interesting to note that the chosen 'collaborator' of the Master is not necessarily either his most advanced disciple or his successor. In the case of Buddha, the two most advanced disciples were held to be Sariputra and Mogdalyana, both of whom predeceased him. The disciple who presided over the first Sangha after the death of Buddha was not Ananda but Maha Kasyapa. In the case of Christ, St. Peter is said to have been the architect of the Church and St. Paul was certainly the architect of the doctrine. In the case of Mohammed, the immediate successor was Abu Bakr, the first caliph. Umar, the second caliph, was the founder of the Empire. Uthman, the third caliph, drew up the official, uniform text of the Quran. Ali came only as fourth caliph and was a very unsuccessful one at that.

If this tradition of a collaborator has continued into modern times one would look for it only in one who, apart from being a saint, had the particular function of starting or restoring a spiritual current in the world; and indeed it is to be seen in the association of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Towards Ramakrishna, Vivekananda holds the combined position of Christ's two apostles St. John and St. Peter. Like St. John, he was the 'beloved disciple'. Ramakrishna was quite open about this and never concealed his partiality. Like St. Peter, he was the head of the surviving disciples and of the institution which was to perpetuate Ramakrishna's influence.

In thus speaking of Vivekananda, it seems necessary to discount the estimate on the one hand of those enthusiasts who want to make him equal to his Master, and on the other of those Western critics who quote a few of his sayings out of context in order to deny him any recognition at all. Sri Ramakrishna himself said that Vivekananda would complete his work but without being

in a state of Realization (that the treasure he had been shown would be locked up again and the Mother would give the key back to him only after he had finished his life's work).

Before considering whether Vivekananda completed Ramakrishna's work the first question is what that work was. Hinduism was at a very low ebb when he appeared. Hindus were apathetic and half ashamed of it and were inclined to fall for missionary propaganda. The West was ignorant of it and inclined to be contemptuous. But a new age of spiritual quest and understanding among groups and individuals who reject the modern materialism was dawning in East and West alike, and a reawakened spiritual current in Hinduism was an essential basis for this. Sri Ramakrishna awakened this new current by his very being. He did not need to talk about it. Much, however, still remained to be done. It was Vivekananda with his dynamic personality and passionate enthusiasm who restored self-respect to Hindus in India and made Hinduism respected in the West. It was he who thereby prepared the field in which the seeds of new spiritual life could flourish. So the not very surprising conclusion is that things happened as Sri Ramakrishna had predicted.

Again a new trend has been started by Ramana Maharshi, a path of inner quest arising in Hindu India but available to the new age type of seeker outside the orthodoxy of any religion. Does the pattern hold with him too? Has or had he a special lieutenant? And if so, who? To say, as has been done by various persons, that so and so is 'the Maharshi's Vivekananda' overlooks the fact that the pattern is always repeated with diversity; it would not be likely that there should be a similar type of helper in two successive cases. A number of people have been instrumental in spreading the Maharshi's influence — Ganapathi Muni to the more tantric type of follower, the poet Muruganar to Tamil Advaitins, Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan to the academic world, first Paul Brunton and then Arthur Osborne to the West; but none of these fill the role.

With the Maharshi also, let us first raise the question what was the nature of his work. He was not establishing a new religion for a whole community but a path of inner quest for seekers; therefore no organization of society was needed. It was a path to be followed by each one in his own heart; therefore no institution was needed. But it was and is centred at his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai, and therefore some organization, some 'temporal power' was required. This was built up (and here the traditional pattern becomes evident) by his younger brother, the Sarvadhikari. The temporal power was kept quite separate from the spiritual; and the wisdom of that is now apparent. Had the two been combined, the Maharshi's Ashram would have become unable to function when he was no longer

physically present to direct it; but since he had made it run independently during his lifetime it could continue to do when his bodily presence was removed. Before leaving the body he allowed a will to be drawn up in his name stating that his Ashram was to remain a spiritual centre and to continue to be run by the Sarvadhikari and the latter's descendents. This shows that he did appreciate the need for it.

The answer to the question is, therefore, that the Maharshi also did have a collaborator but only in the domain of 'temporal power'. In the work which it was his function on earth to perform this domain had no very great importance; but it was also not completely without importance or he would not have established it and made provision for its perpetuation.

Ripeness

By Bharatananda

THE burning regret which many, probably, share with me, is that full advantage was not taken of those happy and precious days, when He was with us physically also — eating — talking — laughing — teaching, welcoming all. Reality was there — in abundance and for the taking, but we enclosed ourselves in timidity, false humility, in self-depreciation and false excuses. We took a cupful when the ocean was at our feet.

Now He is still with us, but no longer so easily accessible. To find Him again we must overcome the very obstacles which prevented us from seeing Him as He was and going with Him where He wanted to take us. It was Tamas and Rajas — fear and desire that stood in the way — the desire for the plea-

sure of the past and fear of austere responsibilities of a higher state of being. It was the same old story — the threshold of maturity of mind and heart which most of us refuse to cross. 'Ripeness is all', — and now ripeness is the condition of finding Him again.

We ripen when we refuse to drift, when striving ceaselessly becomes a way of life, when dispassion born of insight becomes spontaneous. We are ripening fast when the search 'Who am I?' becomes the only thing that matters, when we become a mere torch and the flame all-important. We cannot accelerate that ripening — but we can remove the obstacles of fear and greed, indolence and fancy, prejudice and pride which retard it. He is there and waiting — timelessly. It is we who keep him waiting.

SOPHIA'S THREE SUITORS

By

DOUGLAS E. HARDING

THERE once lived a princess called Sophia who was not only charming and incomparably beautiful, but also (true to her name) the very perfection of wisdom. One day, three suitors arrived at her palace — a bold knight, a love-struck poet and a rude swineherd.

First, the knight was admitted to her presence.

"How many dragons have you killed recently?" inquired the princess.

"Practically none, dear lady," he admitted. "But my sword and armour are of the finest steel, and for love of you I am going to search out and slay every dragon in this land. I realize the immensity of such a task; for these monsters hide in the depths of the sea and in dark and tortuous caves, and will have to be tracked down one by one and enticed into the open air, where I shall easily finish them off. But even if it takes me all the rest of my life, I vow to accomplish this quest, and so at last become worthy of you. All I ask, before setting out, is your favour and your blessing."

"Indeed you have them, brave knight!" exclaimed the princess. "Your determination and courage are beyond praise, and those terrible dragons certainly have to be dealt with."

So the knight rode away, his armour flashing in the sunlight.

*

Next, the poet was shown in, and began humbly to plead his suit.

"All I can offer, dear princess, is my adoration and the poor songs it inspires. I only hope that one day my devotion to you — expressed, perhaps, in some great composition worthy of its subject — will win your heart. Meanwhile, I beg to be allowed to remain here. I promise not to take advantage of this boon, and come too near you."

"Dear poet," replied the princess, tenderly, "I value your devotion more than I can say, and it is true that no-one wins me who is cold and half-hearted. I shall give orders that you are allocated a pleasant room in the palace."

*

As soon as the poet had gone to his new quarters, the swineherd was admitted, by extremely reluctant officials, to the royal presence. He was an uncouth young man, illiterate, ragged, and still smelling of the pigsty.

"I want you and nothing else, and I want you now," he blurted out.

"But this is outrageous!" cried the princess. "The brave knight and the devoted poet dedicate their whole lives to deserving me one day, and here are you, a malodorous rustic, demanding me instantly, as if I were your birthright, yours for the asking!"

"Why so you are," replied the swineherd, unabashed. "Besides, genuine love is impatient. Your knight is in love with chivalry and dragon-hunting, and that's why he's happy to wait for you indefinitely. Your poet is in love with love and his own love-poems, and that's why he promises to keep at a respectful distance. The truth is that both are frightened of you. But I'm not frightened, and claim you right away."

"I insist that the dragons are dealt with," cried the princess, stamping her foot. "Though you may not be frightened of me, it seems you cannot face them."

"To the knight who faces them out there, they look terrifying, and are in fact practically invulnerable; that's the way he likes his dragons. But when I take them in the rear from here, they are mere pussycats. Now I have come to live with you, all these

monsters will be our household pets — though it may take years to domesticate them all."

"For a swineherd you are quite intelligent," said the princess. "But I still require the wholehearted devotion that the poet offers, even if his good manners are beyond you."

"The only devotion I offer is union, our total identity. Already we are one, and your infinite perfections are more than enough for both of us."

"Ah well," sighed the princess, "I appear to have no alternative. Marry me now, rude swineherd, and deserve me later."

"As my true self, as you, heart of my heart, how could I deserve myself? And as my false self, as that evil-smelling rustic, how could I deserve anything at all, even if I killed a million dragons?"

"All the same," replied the princess, smiling, "there is room for much improvement. Indeed I notice it has begun already. Even that horrid smell has gone."

Gap of Eternity

By N. R. Rajagopalaiyer

The aim of Self-enquiry is for the mind to remain quiescent in the waking state, for stillness is the sole requisite.

With vocal silence and mental quiescence a completely indrawn mind seeks the source of the 'I'.

The aim of vichara or enquiry is annihilation of the ego-mind. The essential is determination to seek the source of the ego-mind. If, when a mantra is repeated, one keenly watches wherefrom the sound emanates the mind will get absorbed there and that is tapas, says Ramana.

When the mind does not think at all, being completely devoid of vasanās, there dawns the state of mindlessness which is the great Peace.

When thoughts occur at split second intervals this minute gap is one's natural or primal state.

If the mind is kept fully concentrated on the quest for its source it is unable to wander and thus remains fixed in the heart.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' is not an empty formula; it is more than the repetition of any mantra. Its very purpose is to focus the entire mind at its source and it involves an intense activity of the entire mind to keep it steadily poised in pure Self-awareness, says Ramana.

The quest is indicated by the two expressions: 'Who am I?' and 'Whence am I?'. 'Who am I?' connotes the search for one's own reality; 'Whence am I?' connotes the search for the origin of the I-thought. Both are the same search.

Mind is the cause of bondage and freedom alike.

THE RAMA LEGEND

By

C. N. PATEL

Prof. C. N. Patel of the Gujarat Educational Service is a devoted student of Shakespeare, Valmiki and Gandhi and an able writer alike in English, Sanskrit and Gujarati.

THE Rama legend has exercised a spell over the imagination of all Hindus which cannot be explained merely by reference to the moral ideals exemplified by it. The epics and the Puranas tell of other heroes devoted to truth and service of parents. These inspire admiration, not love and reverence, as Rama has done over the centuries. What is the secret? What has the Hindu imagination made of Valmiki's narrative?

Every legend which exercises a shaping influence on a whole civilization and culture must have answered some deep psychological or ethical need of the race that can be understood only by reference to the stage which it had reached in its inner and outward growth and to the circumstances which conditioned its struggle for existence in the age when the legend took form. The Rama legend probably had as its background the bitter and prolonged struggle between the Aryan and non-Aryan races in semi-historical India. But it is plain that the character of Rama came to inspire the reverence that it did not because of his success against the Rakshasas but because that success was believed to have been achieved through a power of more than human significance, and the conception of that power embodied in Rama represented a stage in the spiritual growth of the race.

This power was something in Rama which gave him the strength and fitness to use, with perfect mastery, the divine weapons bestowed on him by Vishvamitra and other sages. This something manifests itself in Rama's phenomenal capacity to inspire love and devotion. Valmiki has by no means

presented his hero as a character of unblemished perfection. There are a few moments of weakness in his life, and the honest poet has not glossed over them. But he seems to have been struck by the magnetic effect of Rama's character on all, far and near, and the narrative derives its unity from the progressive revelation of this power till the hero is surrounded with a divine halo and the reader is not surprised when, after the battle in Lanka, Rama is revealed to be an avatar of Vishnu.

At first, this power of inspiring love is presented as a purely human quality. The Ayodhya Kanda opens with a description of Rama's character which prepares the reader for the eagerness with which Dasharatha's decision to instal Rama as Prince Regent is acclaimed by the court, the people and the Emperor's feudatories. However, when Rama is banished, we are not a little surprised by the outburst of grief which convulses Ayodhya. We know that the young prince was the delight of Dasharatha's heart, but mere fatherly love cannot account for the shock which paralyses his being at the thought of separation from Rama. The intensity of his love for Rama betokens some extraordinary quality in Rama himself. This impression strengthens into an irresistible conviction as we watch the spontaneous demonstration of the people's love for Rama. Sumitra, Lakshmana's mother, seems to have no thought for the impending separation from her son; she is more concerned with Rama's safety and comfort in the forest, and exhorts her son to serve his elder brother faithfully, regarding him as Dasharatha and Sita as herself. The ladies of the court, too, are no less attached

to Rama than Sumitra. But above all, it is the description of the people of Ayodhya, men and women and children, running after Rama's chariot in uncontrollable grief, which overwhelms the reader with a sense of the power of attraction which Rama's character possessed. "He was dear to the people as though he was their very life in visible form" — this is how the poet had described Rama in the opening canto of Ayodhya Kanda, and we now see that he had not exaggerated.

In the forest, the ascetics show themselves under the spell of Rama in a different way. They have heard of him and of his banishment, and are eagerly awaiting his arrival at their Ashrama. They greet him with a depth of respect which seems to surprise Rama himself. He is a Kshatriya Prince and these forest-dwellers are dedicated sadhakas, but they receive him as one deserving no less honour than a Brahmin or rishi of eminent merit. All of them who meet Rama, including Atri and Agastya, eminent personages in the ascetic world, seem to be conscious of a presence of unaccountable greatness.

So far, Rama has moved in the human world and the poet's art has generally kept itself within the bounds of ordinary rational probability. But now, the poet brings his hero into contact with the sub-human creation. The magic of art with which he does this without a trace of incongruity is rivalled only by Shakespeare among the poets of the world. The first of these characters whom we meet is Jatayu, the vulture-king, enfeebled and pathetic but dignified, who makes a hopeless bid to save Sita from the hands of Ravana. The courage with which he opposes and fights Ravana reveals the power of Rama's character in its effect on non-human creatures. The supernatural quality of this power becomes more evident as we follow the hero to the monkey-world. The poet has endowed the denizens of this world with a self-consistent and entirely plausible character, semi-human and semi-animal, and bound them to Rama in devotion and reverence which cast an irresistible

spell over the reader's imagination. The relationship with Sugriva, the monkey-prince, seldom warms into more than friendship, with a loyalty and gratitude on the part of Sugriva. But Hanuman and, to a lesser extent, Angada and the Vānar host offer to Rama nothing less than religious devotion and worship of the heart. Even Vali, Sugriva's elder brother whom Rama kills, acknowledges Rama's beneficent power. Among the Rakshasas, Maricha and Vibhishana recognize it openly, and the latter, regardless of the odium of being branded a traitor, seeks Rama's protection. Ravana, too, seems to feel in the secret depth of his heart the evil of the course on which he has embarked, and it is through sheer pride of will that he persists in it. The cumulative effect of all these suggestions of a magnetic power is irresistible. No reader who enters into the spirit and atmosphere of the epic can doubt for a moment Valmiki's intention in depicting Rama's character; this power of inspiring love and devotion cannot be accounted for in purely human terms.

Tradition has sought to explain this power by regarding Rama as a partial avatar of Vishnu (*maryāda Puruṣottama*), partial because Rama himself was not conscious of his divinity. Vishnu sustains the universe by the power of dharma, by that power which holds every living being to its function in the scheme of things. For the ordinary human being, dharma is a matter of obeying the injunctions of the Shastras, the rules of moral and social conduct which he or she accepts on the basis of external authority. But in the final analysis man obeys external authority, that of a leader, a book or a tradition, because in the depth of his heart he feels that it is right to do so. This inner sense, obscure and undeveloped in most of us, is the essence of dharma. Hindu tradition calls it the *antarātman*, the indwelling Godhead. This *antarātman* is not an external authority to be obeyed willingly or unwillingly, but the voice of the Divine Presence in us, as distinct from the Nature-bound ego-self. Dharma is spontaneous or willing submission of the ego-self to this *antarātman*. Rama, it is believed, embodied

dharma in its perfection. The *antarātman* in him rules his actions so completely that every decision he took was marked by an inner serenity. In worshipping him, the Hindus worship the Divine Presence in every human heart which points for each individual the way of righteousness. This Presence is no task-master ; the *sattvic* ego-self recognizes in it the *suhridam sarvabhutanam* (Lover of all beings) of the Gita (Ch. V, 29) to which one can and should surrender oneself in love and adoration. The significance of Rama-*bhakti* consists in the recognition that one's duty is a light to guide, not a rod to check.

The aim of this *bhakti* is to seek, not dissolution of the ego-self, but its transformation, so that it functions as the willing servant of Rama, of the Divine Presence in our hearts. When the ego-self is, even partially, so transformed, it discovers a new meaning in human relationship. The bonds

of family and friendship and social obligations are not disregarded as unreal, but are accepted as the means which bind one ego-self to another through a mutual recognition of the Divine Presence in all. Human relationship is thus invested with a sense of sacredness. The chivalric tradition in Europe sought to transform the emotional bond between man and woman ; among the Hindus, Rama-*bhakti* has been the means of idealizing all family and social relationship and making them a source of inner contentment which never fails in all the vicissitudes of life. Mahatma Gandhi strove to extend the scope of the self-transformation brought about by the worship of Rama, so that our modern, humanitarian sensibility should become as much a religious emotion as family ties are to most Hindus. Whether his dream will come true depends on whether Rama-*bhakti* is still a living force among the Hindus.

His Direct Deep Method

By K. R. R. Sastry

The Maharshi never got lost within the cobwebs of words. When a Parsi doctor asked "As Atma is devoid of name or form, should it be meditated upon with *Jnana Atheetha Bhakti*, *Bhakti* which is superior to *Jnana* ?"

Bhagavan replied. "If you say that you should meditate does not that imply *Dwaita* (Dualism) ? It implies one who meditates and that on which he meditates ; *Atma* however is nameless, and formless, just a witness ; the eye is one's own self. That eye is everywhere. Only one eye. Then what is there to meditate upon ? Who is it that meditates ? It is the eye which is everywhere which is called "*Asthi*, *Bhakti* and *priyam* or *Sat-Chit-Ananda* or by many other names. The names are many but the thing is only one".

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

By
I. JESUDASAN, S.J.

THE tiny but immense volume of the *Spiritual Exercises*, as Pope Pius XII qualified it, belongs to that class of books (like the *Imitation of Christ*) which have exerted a great conquering influence and have changed a million lives. According to St. Francis de Sales, the internal conversions it has effected are far more numerous than the letters in its text.



St. Ignatius

There have been such spiritual exercises both before and since the time of St. Ignatius, and he had learnt from the spiritual wisdom of the past. But the Ignatian Exercises, which are indeed a school of holiness and a lifetime's programme of asceticism, are very methodically concentrated in a retreat of definite duration. Originally meant to be made in thirty days, they may, if necessary, be condensed to eight or ten days. Prayer, divine light and inspiration of the interior Teacher and the visible director's guidance go to make the exercises bear their full fruit. Prayer is the medium in which all the exercises are made. Indeed the exercises themselves are a prayer. Docility to the interior Teacher (the Holy Spirit) and the exterior teacher (the director of the retreat or the Exercises) is a necessary pre-condition. The purpose of the Spiritual Exercises being conquest of self, finding God's will as to the state of life one should choose (also called Election), or the right ordering of one's life, the Saint expects one to enter upon the exercises with an open mind and a generous will ready to carry out God's behests and not with any foregone decisions arrived at through inordinate attachments. In the Saint's own words, "Under the name of Spiritual Exercises is understood every method of examination of conscience, of meditation, of contemplation, of vocal and mental prayer, and

of other spiritual operations, as shall hereafter be declared: for as to go for a walk, to take a journey, and to run, are bodily exercises, so in like manner, all methods of praying and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate affections, and, after it has rid itself of them, to seek and to find the divine will in the ordering of one's life with a view to the salvation of one's soul, are called Spiritual Exercises."

The canon ball which struck the gallant defender of the Pampeluna fortress marks the first step towards these Exercises. An indirect and hardly conscious preparation for it had gone on all through his convalescence, his reading the lives of Christ and the saints, his leaving the Loyola castle, his confession and a night's vigil at Montserrat, and his life of prayer and penance in the Manresa cave. From these there came not the book of the Exercises, not even the idea of writing

it, but a kind of diary full of disconnected jottings meant for personal use. The book was not written until the extraordinary illumination in 1522 on the bank of the Cordoner, in the fifth month of his stay at Manresa. In that illumination, St. Ignatius saw the full substance and structure of the Exercises. From the rank of a clumsy and ignorant novice, he passed to the status of a master. Soon he made the exercises thus conceived, the first in a long series of exercitants to come, and afterwards made a first draft of them in writing for his own use. Later, however, recognizing their usefulness to others, he revised the original draft. And from that day to this, the Spiritual Exercises has undergone more than 4,500 editions in scores of different languages. Scarcely any other ascetical work has enjoyed such wide diffusion in modern times.

A landmark in the spiritual Odyssey of St. Ignatius, the "Spiritual Exercises" (the germs of the Society are discernible in it) is for all Jesuits too, the God-given instrument of their own and their neighbours' spiritual formation. Every Jesuit makes them in their full length of a month twice in his life-time, and returns to them once every year, for a period of eight to ten days, in order to gain afresh his spiritual vision, vigour and determination. The sanctity attained by the Jesuit saints is one mapped out by the Spiritual Exercises. Nearly 1,000,000 people make the Exercises annually (their number is ever on the increase) and draw immense spiritual profit from them. And whoever applies himself to their directives, will find in these Exercises a safe and sure introduction to the authentic life of prayer.

Meant as a manual for directors of retreats, the "Spiritual Exercises" owes its effectiveness not to its literary elegance, nor to the force of its language, nor even solely to the fact that it conveys a felt human experience, but to the fact that it is a work of divine grace which intimately touches and concerns and pictures the actual or possible drama or history of every human soul in its ascent to perfection.

Every seeker in the spiritual life feels the need for a teacher. And the director of the retreat is there to propose the points, guide the exercitant in discerning the movements of the good and the evil spirits, and not to substitute the interior Teacher, nor to interpose between him and the exercitant. Even in proposing the points for meditation, he is to be brief in his explanation, so that the exercitant may himself find something that makes the meditated points a little clearer or more deeply felt (whether this happens through his own reasoning or through the enlightenment of his understanding by divine grace), "for it is not abundance of knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul, but to feel and taste matters interiorly."

St. Ignatius in the Exercises lays out the drama of the soul into four stages or weeks each with a fruit proper to it. The first one opens with a key consideration called Principle and Foundation. Since man is created to praise, reverence and serve God, and thereby to save his soul, and the other things on the face of the earth are meant to help him attain this purpose, he ought to use them only in so far as they serve this purpose, and abstain from them in so far as they hinder it. And such conduct in the use of creatures requires that we be detached from them. This is the doctrine which underlies the whole Exercises, and this the foundation on which the superstructure of the Ignatian spirituality is built. Deep down under the seeming simplicity of its rugged words, there lies a wealth of meaning which only a serious and prayerful meditation can fathom and unearth.

The opening exercise lays the fundamental principle of right order. But the next two exercises of the first week show how the disorder of sin entered into creation together with its consequences: death, hell etc. Having considered sin in others, the exercitant turns to the foulness and malice of his own sins. Others have been punished eternally for fewer sins, while he is still spared and preserved in the way of salvation by Christ hanging on the cross. Full of confusion, sorrow, tears and gratitude, the exercitant

asks himself: What have I done for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ? What am I going to do for Christ?

The exercitant being purified at the confessional, and nourished at the sacred table, St. Ignatius helps him preserve the fruits of the purgative way, by counselling him penance, the different methods of prayer, and a daily made general and particular examination of conscience and warning him of the possible avenues of temptation at this stage.

Certain answers suggest themselves to the exercitant asking himself what he is going to do for Christ. Is he sincere? Will he now put them into practice? The test comes in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ presented in the allegory of an ideal king inviting his subjects to conquer every foe and the whole world itself, by labouring with him by day and watching with him by night, and thus to follow him in victory. Every reasonable man will enlist himself for such a cause, seeing that the king's enemies are his own enemies. But a gratefully chivalrous and magnanimous man like St. Ignatius must distinguish himself by making offerings of greater worth and moment to imitate Christ in bearing all injuries and all reproach and all poverty as well actual as spiritual, if the Divine Majesty is pleased to receive him to such a state of life.

Once the exercitant thus pledges himself to follow Christ closely, the mysteries of Christ's hidden and public life unfold themselves before him and he begins to walk the illuminative way. Throughout this week, the special grace to ask is "an interior knowledge of our Lord in order that I may love him better and follow him more closely." Moreover in considering the life of Christ from the second to the fourth week, contemplation replaces meditation. In the meditation the discursive intellect sets the will in motion, while in contemplation, from a simple vision we pass to affective prayer. The deeper aim in introducing these contemplations on the sacred humanity of Christ is its efficacy of transforming us better than all our efforts to acquire virtue

and root out vice. For, as Bishop Hedley puts it, "Laden with our weakness and imperfection, we gaze upon Jesus, and they begin to melt away and disappear.... There is in the contemplation of the Sacred Humanity a certain power of transforming our hearts into the likeness of Christ itself."¹ And the Christ whom St. Ignatius presents in these contemplations is not a mere model from the past to conform to, but the living Captain and Leader who labours, toils and fights in us, His Church, till His and our enemy within is utterly destroyed and His Mystical Body, the Church, reaches its fullest stature.²

Before coming to the election of a state of life which is central to the Exercises, or the reform of life as the case may be, St. Ignatius again introduces three very important exercises. The first of them is what is called the Two Standards—that of Christ and Satan. Its purpose is not to choose between the two. That fundamental option has already been made at baptism. But here and now as the exercitant is engaged in the serious work of election, he is sure to be moved by opposing spirits. The purpose of this exercise then is to warn him of, and thereby to arm him against the stratagem of subtle deceit—snares and chains—of the arrogant infernal chieftain and his minions who seek to bring souls unbounded pride and consequently perdition through the lust for riches and love of the vain honours of the world. It is also meant at the same time, to imbue the exercitant with the life-giving knowledge of the meek Jesus Christ and His strategy of poverty, humiliations and humility, and the grace to follow Him.

The way in which the Holy Spirit and evil spirit act on a person in the illuminative way is also arrow-marked with admirable expert precision, in the notes on the discernment of spirits. The evil one disguises himself as an angel of light and strives to draw men from the greater to the less

¹ Longridge: *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, p. 252.

² *The Mountain Path*, January 1967, pp. 19-20.

good and then finally to evil. He would ensnare men through easy and apparent goods and bind them with the chains of the really and openly sinful. And in order to cloud their vision from his malicious purpose, he casts doubts, confusion and sadness. The Spirit of Christ, on the contrary, dispels the mist, radiates and works amidst light and certitude, joy and serenity. "By their fruits you shall know them."

The second exercise depicts three types or classes of men who are inordinately attached to the fortune they have acquired, but want to rid themselves of the attachment and save their souls. The first type stops short of action and remains in mere wishful thinking. The second class has recourse to all but the one means necessary. The third category do get rid of the disorderly attachment by disposing themselves to do God's will and earnestly seeking to find that divine will. What class does the exercitant belong to? St. Ignatius puts him in the presence of God our Lord, and asks him to pray for light to find that which is to the greater glory of God and for Strength to choose it.

The third and last exercise treats of three modes of humility, better called three degrees of love. The first is so to submit oneself to God that neither for life nor every earthly honour and possession, not even under the greatest stress of temptation, does one think even for a moment, of disobeying the divine command in a grave and serious matter, thereby risking salvation. The second implies so great a detachment from riches and poverty, honour and dishonour, health and sickness, a long life and a short one etc., provided God's glory and one's salvation are equally attainable by both, that not for the whole world, not even for life itself would one enter into deliberation about disobeying God's will even in small matters. Here is already high spiritual perfection. But in order that this may be the better and the more surely attained, St. Ignatius proposes a third and higher one still which includes and transcends the first two grades, and consists in so great a love of Christ that even if God's glory and the soul's salvation

are equally attainable by both, still in order the more actually to imitate and resemble Christ, "I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches; reproaches with Christ laden therewith, rather than honours; and I desire to be accounted worthless and a fool for Christ, Who was first held to be such, rather than wise and prudent in this world."

The highest point of the "Spiritual Exercises" has been reached. All inordinate attachments being removed, the exercitant is disposed to make the election with an open mind and a generous heart. In guiding the exercitant to make the actual election, St. Ignatius gives him certain preliminary instructions regarding it. Since all election must be conducive to the ultimate and envisaged in the Principle and Foundation, it can only be made from among good things and things that are not sinful. He also points out how a wrongly made election may be amended, be it mutable or immutable. (Priesthood and matrimony would be instances of immutable election). The election is made easy when there is a direct call from God as in the case of St. Matthew and St. Paul. Failing this rare direct vocation one has to find it by discerning the experiences of consolation and desolation whenever he gives thought to this subject. In the absence of these, one has to make up one's mind by the free and tranquil use of one's faculties.

If this is his case, the exercitant must first recall his ultimate end, propose to himself the matter of the election, implore light and strength from above, tabulate the pros and cons of both sides of the election from every possible aspect, choose the side on which reason (not mere inclination predominates, commend the decision to God and invoke His blessing and confirmation upon it.

Another method of actual election is to consider what the exercitant would advise to a stranger in identical circumstances; or to consider how the exercitant would be affected towards this choice at the moment of his death or on the day of judgement.

and accordingly to make his choice. The same rules will hold good also for the reform of an already chosen state of life. St. Ignatius closes the chapter on election with one last sound and tried principle of the spiritual life: "Let each one reflect that he will make progress in all spiritual matters, just so far as he shall have divested himself of self-love, self-will and self-interest."

Alongside of the election, the contemplations on the life of Christ are continued; for, some aspect of His life may most strongly appeal to us; and a surer and more reliable clue to one's state of life and its reform often lies in that direction. For, as Longridge says, "Vocation is in truth nothing else but a vision of Jesus. If once we see Him, the beauty of the vision is so great, so compelling, that we must desire to follow Him and be made like to Him in that which we see in Him. We could not have a true vision of Him and not desire to be made like to Him. Our lower nature may indeed shrink from the vision and all that it involves. For the natural heart the vision of Jesus has no beauty that we should desire it. But if God has illuminated our minds by His Holy Spirit, and touched our hearts with the unction of His grace, then we cannot help desiring, in our higher selves, to follow where the vision calls us, however awful and mysterious it may appear."³

In all the four preceding principal exercises, the retreatant prayed insistently to be admitted under the banner of the cross in bearing all injuries, all reproaches and all poverty. Now in the third week that prayer is granted: the vision of all that Christ suffers for him confirms his resolution and the chosen state of life. In the mysteries of this week, starting with the agony in the garden and ending with Christ's death and burial, the one grace to ask is sorrow with Christ in sorrow, a broken heart with Christ heart-broken, tears and interior pain for the great pain that Christ has suffered for me, and the strength and courage to do and suffer great things for Christ.

United with Christ in His sufferings, the exercitant then follows Him in the joy of

His risen life. The prayer peculiar to the fourth week is a petition for immense disinterested joy and gladness at the happiness and great glory of Christ, our Lord. Assured of his own resurrection by Christ's, and reassured by His comforting words that it was necessary that He should suffer and so enter into His glory, the disciple is confirmed in the conviction that the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. At this conviction, his resolution and election receive a fresh confirmation. One with Christ in His suffering and resurrection, the exercitant has reached the unitive way of perfect love.

All the fore-going exercises have led up to this love. And now, when the exercitant is about to finish the retreat and return to normal activity or the newly chosen state of life, St. Ignatius gives him as the wayfare one last exercise on how to abide in this love. It is entitled *Contemplation for Obtaining Love*. Prefacing the contemplation with two introductory remarks, namely that true love manifests itself in deeds rather than in words, and that these deeds often take the form of mutual gift of what each one has, St. Ignatius asks the exercitant to review all the graces and benefits he has received from God, — creation, redemption and other gifts. God and the exercitant take the places of (become) the lover and the beloved. God's love being considered, the motive of gratitude and return-love prompts the exercitant to make a like gift. (This is the pattern which runs through the entire Exercises, and therefore this contemplation is a fine summing up of the whole retreat). But he finds that he has nothing which he has not received from God. Still, knowing that God is pleased to permit it, he makes an offering of himself, saying, "Take, O Lord, and receive, all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, all I have and possess. Thou hast given all this to me; to Thee, O Lord, I restore it: all is Thine, dispose of it entirely according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me."

³ Longridge: *Op. cit.* p. 235.

Going a step further, St. Ignatius shows that God does not merely give the gifts, but gives Himself with them, and works in them for our good. The practical implication is clear. We must rise from the gift to the giver, from the less perfect to the Most Perfect and must give and spend ourselves in doing His will, for His sake, for His honour and glory. This is the meaning of the "Take, O Lord and receive" which he asks the exercitant to repeat with love and sincerity at every point. This was also implied in all the key meditations and colloquies. But now they become clearer from this vantage point. The exercitant is now prepared to live out the Exercises, to live a life of love, to turn everything into an act of love.

We have so far looked at the "Spiritual Exercises" in the broad outlines of its structure. A word on the general method followed in it throughout would not be out of place. Before every exercise or meditation, the retreatant has to prepare or hear the points for that meditation. Then recollecting himself in the presence of God, he prostrates himself on the ground, and, rising up at once, he offers up the whole exercise for the praise and glory of His Divine Majesty and begins the meditation. To check and avoid the wandering and distraction of mind, and fix it on the subject of the meditation, and serve as a point of departure and return, St. Ignatius localises it in a particular scene called composition of place. After this prelude and a petition for the fruit of the meditation (which will vary with the subject and the disposition of the exercitant), the meditation strictly so called begins. Here the discursive part is meant to illumine the will, since without this light of reason, the ardour and natural impulse of the will would lack depth and permanence. And, though the will plays its effective role throughout each exercise, St. Ignatius would have the exercitant collect the fruit of the meditation in a final colloquy or intimate talk with God the Father, Christ our Lord the Holy Spirit or the saints, according to the context. The exercitant may accordingly speak as a friend to his friend, a son to his

parent, a spouse to his beloved, a criminal to his judge etc. etc. At the end the exercitant must review for a quarter of an hour how he has made the meditation, what fruit he has gathered from it, and, if he has failed, the reason for the failure so that he may amend in the next meditation.

There are five such exercises every day, of more than an hour's duration. Naturally the exercitant will feel tired as the day advances. In order not to overtax his nerves therefore St. Ignatius changes the meditations into repetitions, "applications of the senses", and contemplations. In the repetitions, the exercitant is to return only to that part of the meditation or contemplation where he experienced special light and joy or repulsion, because these are signs that God wants to teach him something through them. The difference between contemplation and "application of the senses" lies in this that while we see and hear in contemplation, all the internal senses come into play in the other method. But whatever form the repetition may take, its primary aim is to obtain the desired result more surely and make it sink deeper into our being. It is for the same objective that external aids ("additions") peculiar to each week are provided. Also, St. Ignatius makes provision to prolong or shorten the weeks according as the exercitant draws their fruit slower or faster.

The contemplations which St. Ignatius asks us to make in the Exercises are different from mystical contemplations. The former are acquired, the latter infused. To be sure, St. Ignatius was indeed a mystic. He had had the mystical experiences. Many of those who knew him well have testified how for hours on end he used to remain ecstatically rapt in contemplation. But the Saint himself, like the humble man he was, destroyed all his notes on these experiences, knowing as he did that this ineffable mystical union with God is a gift from above, and not one to be humanly acquired or communicated.

To review it briefly once again, the "Spiritual Exercises" is constructed with

organic unity or architectonic quality. It communicates a profoundly un-and-other-worldly wisdom which has invariably an ethical bearing or relation to practical life. It is an intense methodical ascetical training and a masterful combination of idealism and realism in which action flows from and is illumined by supernatural principles, thus making the exercitant, together with St. Ignatius, a contemplative in action. St. Ignatius's many aids to prayer and examination of conscience, known as preludes and additions, and the varied repetitions of the contemplations bespeak his insight into human psychism. His analysis of the causes of consolation and desolation in prayer, his guidelines for alms-giving, scruples, penances and thinking with the Church and the "discernment of spirits" come from a long and deeply felt personal experience. But above all, it is a work suffered with love and leading to the heights of divine love.

But all that I have said is only meant to give the unacquainted reader some idea of the book, however inadequate, and not as a substitute for it. The best way to come to appreciate the *Spiritual Exercises* is to make them or at least to read the book prayer-

fully and with humility. Those advanced in the inner life will be able to recognize its spiritual depth and soundness without the help of any commentary. But novices in the spiritual life like me will be helped by an annotated edition. Such may be advised to consult one or more of the following books. In India, copies of the "*Spiritual Exercises*" may be obtained from Anand Press, Anand, (Gujarat), or from St. Paul Publications, Allahabad 2. A standard annotated Indian edition by Ambruzzi is available at St. Aloysius College, Mangalore. "*Ignatian Insights*" by Rev. H. Cathalem, S.J., (Kuangchi Press, Taiwan) may be readily had in the Far East. The well-known commentaries of Fr. Rickaby (Burns and Oates London), the Protestant Longridge (A. R. Norway & Co. Ltd., London), the Spaniard Iparraguirre (*A Key to the Study of the Spiritual Exercises*, Little Flower Press, Calcutta), and the Italian Ambruzzi (*A Companion to the Spiritual Exercises*, Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland) may be suggested to Western readers. Any Jesuit priest will be able to supply a longer list of bibliography, or even to lend a copy of the *Exercises* and commentary, or better still, to give the *Exercises*.

The Lord is One without a second. With his divine power he rules over all the worlds. Within man he dwells, and within all other beings. He projects the universe, maintains it, and withdraws it into himself.

— *Svetasvatara Upanishad*.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AS A COURSE OF STUDY by Arthur Osborne

H. T. HAMBLIN by G. H. Gedge

THE DIVINE PRISM by Gladys De Meuter

THE SKANDA PURANA by Shambu Bhat

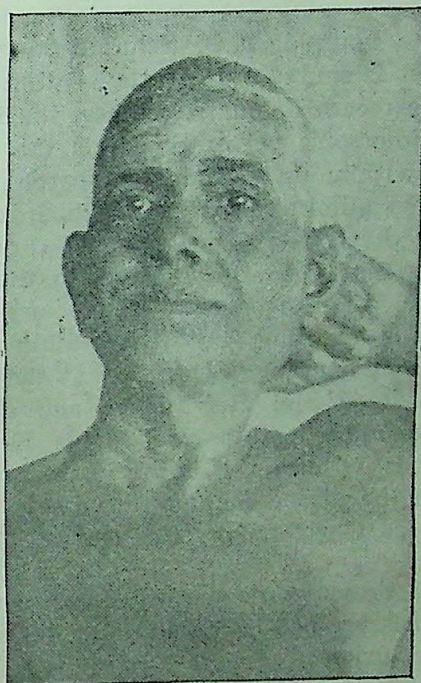
THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUE SELF

By
MAX HOPPE

Mr. Max Hoppe (Brother Dhammapala), is the head of Altbuddhistische Gemeinde, 8919, Utting, a.A., West Germany. Many students of Buddhism and Vedanta and also a few devotees of Sri Bhagavan in West Germany have found in this monastery a peaceful retreat. Mr. Max Hoppe also is an enthusiastic Agent for our journal in that area.

IN suffering we are left to ourselves. No one can relieve us of our sorrows, our pain, our sleeplessness. They demand our own reaction. They either drive us into bitterness, making us slaves of our emotional disposition and our physical state, or they help us towards understanding, thereby opening for us the gate to real happiness according to the words of Master Eckhart: "Suffering is the fastest steed carrying us towards perfection."

Suffering which becomes fertile because it leads to transforming understanding, that is understanding of suffering as it is regarded in the Doctrine of the Buddha, in an inspired manner is characterized by Hans Much in the words: "The propelling force will be realized by the resistance, — primal eternal being by the suffering of impermanence. The suffering of impermanence is the reminder that we are imperishable."



In his book *In Dir ist das Licht* (The Light is within You) K. O. Schmidt places before us the life and the teachings of 49 great religious geniuses in their peculiar and illuminating aspects. Also the greatest saint in recent times, Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), is getting a hearing. In his account K. O. Schmidt says: "The word of the Greek philosopher Thales 'Gnothi seauton' — 'Know thyself' — which stood over the entrance to the Apollon Temple at Delphi, has been increased in depth and substance by the surpassing demand of the Maharshi 'Know THINE SELF'. For, whereas the reminder of the philosopher aims at the cognition of the conditions and lines of conduct, inclinations, weaknesses and

defects, strengths and limits of the I, the demand of the mystic aims at the transcendent, true or divine Self, in whose radiance the transitory 'I' vanishes — and with it all questioning, all uncertainty and misery.

"Whoever desires to penetrate the marvel of Godhead, will easily draw his wisdom — from within himself", proclaims to us Master Eckhart; and Jakob Bohme says: "Where do you want to search for God? In the depth above the stars? There you will not find him. Look for him in your heart, in the centre of your being: there you will find him!" For this exploring of the Self, Atma-vichara, Sri Ramana Maharshi provides a clear starting point by the ques-

tions "Who am I? What am I? Where am I?", questions emanating from the present existence demanding decisions.

Arthur Osborne, the well known scholar of Sri Ramana Maharshi, says in this connection: "This summons for Self investigation is a practical method of training and has nothing in common with the psychological introspection. It is something far deeper. It is not a question of impulses and motives but the questioning after the Self which is at the bottom of same."

In the book of K.O. Schmidt mentioned above, it is said: "The SELF — that is the innermost core of our substance, the Higher SELF, Emerson's 'Over-Soul', is the divine spark within us. And the search for it begins by eliminating all that which it is not and by the constant question 'Who am I?' it leads finally to the I-Am: to the SELF. Looking at it from the right angle this search is nothing but the fulfilment of Christ's demand: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Justice and all else shall be added unto you.' This Kingdom of God is within us, it is the luminous kingdom of the divine Self or the 'Christ within us' as Christian mystics call it."

After these words we are directed to the great message of the Buddha with its powerful conclusion:

"What I see arising and perishing and in consequence of this transitoriness bringing me suffering, that cannot be my Self. Now I see all that may be recognized on and around myself arising and perishing and thereby bringing me suffering. Therefore nothing that can be recognized is my true Self."

Already Heraclitus of Ephesus realized "All is flowing" and he illustrated universal transitoriness by the words: "Into the same rivers we step in and step out, it is ourselves and it is not." One of his scholars no longer dared to express this constant and rapid change of all happening in words but only in the end snapped his fingers symbolically. There were always many who saw

the illusionary nature and the unsubstantiality of all phenomena and many a man may be touched by what I once read on a gravestone: "The world goes on in her doings, the people come and go — as though you never had been, as though nothing ever happened."

The more wise have always recognized that literally everything vanished as we deem to hold it in our hands, that for this very reason everything to whichever I may be attached does not represent a substantial I or Self. When we see things in their isolation nothing remains of eternal value. Therefore, at all times those with deeper insight have spoken of a state of disaster, of a vale of tears. The Buddha, the Fully Awakened One, however, has also seen the other side of reality. In the meditations leading to awakening all depends on our clearly viewing these transitory factors as not our SELF, as not the true SELF. The Fully Awakened One clearly and plainly says this in Samyutta-Nikaya, a scripture of the old Pali-Canon: "That which is transitory is painful; what is painful is an-atta (not the Atta; not the SELF); an-atta stands for: 'That does not belong to me, that am I not, that is not my Self'."

Whoever meditates with this in mind experiences within himself more and more the realization of an unshakable and unassailable, whereby all is dropped as unessential which in truth does not belong to him at all. The Buddha word becomes an innermost experience: "The Tathagata (the Accomplished One within ourselves) is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable like the great ocean." And this makes us wide and free; love and loving kindness develop as we go on the Buddha way, a deep feeling of sympathy is awakened and joy arises when we also see around us joy in mind. The happiness of this experience is always and again emphasized in the Suttas: "This doctrine makes happy in the beginning, makes happy in the middle and makes happy in the end."

In this attitude everything on our life path arranges itself in a manner precisely suited

for us. This gives us right equanimity, however just here keeping us far away from dull indifference. Thus there results for us a confidence founded on cognition, a confidence which gives us constant joy on the way.

An adequate simile is given by George Grimm who he says: "Just as the spraying drops of the raging waterfall are changing quick as lightning, whereas the rainbow the bearer of which they are, remains fixed in immovable calmness, wholly untouched by this restless changing, together with the sun itself, the reflection of which is the rainbow: so also the components of our personality, nay our innumerable personalities as a whole strung one to another as the Sam-sara (circulation of re-births), are changing without pause, whereas the I thought, — the bearer of which they are — as the reflection of our transcendent SELF and also this transcendent SELF remain wholly untouched by this constant change in eternal presence, no matter how many eyes of ours may be closed by death; it (the SELF) looks on the

world, the arising and perishing of the worlds, itself untouched thereby."

The An-atta view really understood from within, the experience that the transitory, frail and thus ultimately always painful attributions making up our personality, are not the SELF, is made clear by the words of George Grimm in his *Buddhistische Meditationen* (Buddhist Meditations):

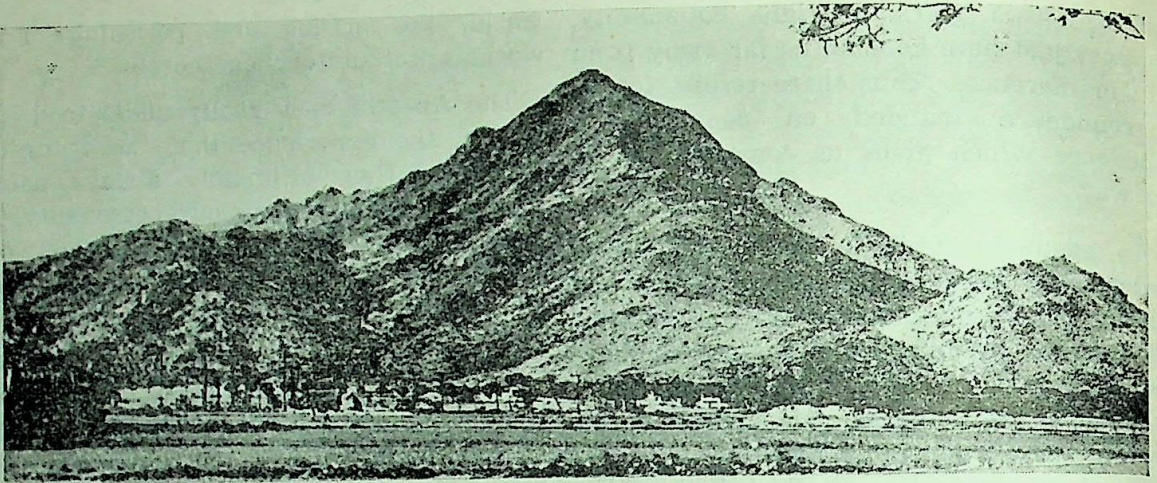
"The heap of the personality processes is only a stream which is flowing past us, however unable to carry ourselves away, rather we are immovably in the present, so that the now with its paltriness ever and ever will be our lot, for an endless time, no matter how many eyes of ours death may close, and there is no end to this agony unless our thirsting will for the possession of a personality is eliminated, that is unless we cease being what we are and become what we are not. The good and wise who look through this and whose will, therefore, is more and more extinguished, come nearer to blissfulness all the time, whereas it always remains remote for the fool."

No Name

By V. Venkataraman

I was once gazing at the historic letter which Bhagavan left for his elder brother on leaving home and renouncing the world. Seeing this, he asked me what I found significant about it. I replied, the fact that it was left unsigned. He asked why that impressed me and I said because it showed that the ego had dropped away and there was no one left to sign it.

"Yes," he said, "but there was nothing deliberate or conscious about it. Simply that the ego did not rise up to sign it."



THE GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

By T. K. S.

In our issues of April and July 1964 we published two articles by the late T. K. Sundaresa Iyer (whose obituary is contained in our issue of April 1965) on the Secrets and the Mythology of Arunachala. These further notes of his on the Glory of Arunachala we have since discovered in the Ashram archives.

THE Lord enshrined in the great temple at Tiruvannamalai is known by the name of Arunachaleswara in Sanskrit. The Tamil is Annamalaiyar.

His Shakti, the Mother Uma, enshrined in the temple, is known as Apeetakucha Nayaki. The Tamil name is Unnamulai Ammai.

The Lord has in truth no name or form, but out of compassion He embodies Himself so that devotees may perceive Him.

The Tamil land is indeed fortunate in being studded with sacred shrines of the embodied Lord. Tiruvannamalai is supreme among them. In modern parlance this is the name given to the town and Arunachala to the mountain, but they are the same. It is said that in the Kritha Yuga (the first or golden age) the mountain was of fire, in Treta Yuga (the silver age) of emerald, in Dwapara Yuga (the copper age) of gold, and now in Kali Yuga (the dark age) it is of earth and rock. Throughout the ages many siddhas have lived on and around this Hill. Many have attained siddhi (powers or Perfection) through walking round it. Invisible siddhas are constantly walking round it.

The Lord Himself, with his consort Uma, goes round twice a year, at Kartikai and Sivaratri. At the points marking the eight directions of space there are lingas and tirtas (tanks of water), each one sacred.

The poet-saints Jnanasambanda and Vageesa, two of the foremost sponsors of the cult of Siva, came here and sang the praises of Arunachala and Uma. Five of their *padhikams* are to be found in the Tevaram. The famous *Embavai* of the poet-saint Manikavachakar was also composed at Arunachala. It was here that the great Arunagirinadar enjoyed his wonderful experience of Atma and with his *Tirupugal* songs spread the fame of the Lord as Subrahmanyam.

Arunachala draws to himself those established in Jnana. That is his glorious reputation. In accordance with this, many are the great saints and poets and sages who have been drawn here, culminating in Ramana Maharshi. Many are those who have rejected all intermediary places and all stages on the Path to merge in Arunachala, the Primal Being. The very thought of them uplifts our mind in the glorious presence of Arunachala.

THE MARATHI POET-SAINTS

By

Prof. S. R. SHARMA

Prof. S. R. Sharma is retired Professor of History from Fergusson College, Poona. He is a widely known exponent both of the history and mysticism of Maharashtra. Apart from history, he has written, *Focus on Tukaram from a Fresh Angle*, *Teachings of Jnanadeva* and *Wisdom Beyond Reason*.

THERE was a resplendent galaxy of poet-saints in Maharashtra from the 13th to the 17th Century, from Jnandev (1275-'96) down to Tukaram (1608-'90). Altogether this was a time of great national vitality, covering the Maratha struggle for independence of the Moghul Empire and its final achievement under Shivaji. On the whole, however, the poet-saints showed no concern with such matters.

They were a strong, rugged, outspoken dynasty drawn from all social classes. Jnandev was a Brahmin, but there were also Namdev, a tailor; Gora, a potter; Savanta, a gardener; Chokha, a sweeper; and Tukaram, a tradesman. There were women too among them: Jnandev's sister Muktabai, Namdev's servant Jani, Chokha's wife Soyara. Their outstanding quality is a beautiful fusing of bhakti with jnana. They worshipped and merged into Oneness with the God they worshipped. This is especially prominent in Tukaram. He declares, for instance,

"When I meditate on the Lord of Pandhari the body becomes transformed together with the mind. Where is there room for speech then? My I-ness is become Hari.¹ With the mind merging in Divine Consciousness all creation looks divine. Tuka says: 'How shall I put it? All at once I become lost in God-consciousness.'"

And again,

"The glory of the bhaktas is known only to themselves. It is hard for others to understand. In order to increase the happiness of love in this world they display duality without actually dividing. This is understood only by those who have experienced Unity through Faith."

Jnandev, with his sister Muktabai and his two brothers, all four of them poet-saints, had an unhappy childhood.

Their father, after taking sannyas, returned to married life, and on that account the orthodox Brahmins ostracised the whole family. They were orphaned young and their genius blazed forth while still in their teens.

¹ Vishnu (God).



Jnandev

Jnandev, the greatest of them, is better known as Jnaneshwara, the 'Lord of Wisdom'. His great work, the *Jnaneshwari* is a monumental verse commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Apart from this there are also his *Abhangas* or devotional lyrics and his *Anubhavāmrita* or 'Elixir of Experience'. Having himself attained this elixir, he says,

"The distinction between liberated, aspirant and bound subsists only so long as this Elixir of Experience is unknown to one. The enjoyer and the enjoyed, the seer and the seen, are merged in the non-dual, which is indivisible. The devotee has become God, the Goal has become God, the Goal has become the path; this indeed is solitude in the universe."²

This magnificent achievement was completed by the age of 22, when he declared that his life's work was finished and ceremoniously entered into samadhi in a specially prepared crypt, having given instructions that it was to be bricked up. This was in the village of Alandi in Poona district. There is a beautiful atmosphere of sanctity and serenity there. It contains a tree under which an unending chain of recitation of the *Jnaneshwari* has gone on till the present day. Jnaneshwara has remained a perennial fount of inspiration for Maharashtra. He was at once the foundation and the crown of this amazing dynasty.

* * * *

Namdev, who arose next, described the three brothers as manifestations of Para-Brahman and spoke of them as shining suns. He himself was primarily a bhakta and ecstatic. In his youth he had been a thief and murderer, until one day, hearing a young mother explain to her fatherless child that they had to live in penury because his father had been killed, he realized with sudden horror that it was he who was the killer, and with a violent revulsion of feeling rushed to the nearby temple to take his own life. He was prevented, however, and he devoted the rest of his life to penance and worship. His ecstatic praise of the Divine Name, with the Maharshi's comments on it, is quoted in *The Mountain Path* of October 1964, pp. 236-7. He wrote in Hindi as well as Marathi (two sister lan-

guages both derived from Sanskrit, as are most of those of North India), and it is interesting to note that some of his Hindi songs are included in the Granth Sahib, the scripture of the Sikhs, which their founder, Guru Nanak, partly wrote and partly compiled.



Namdev

While he was still a simple devotee of God in the form of Vithoba it was Jnaneshwara's sister Muktabai who awoke him to deeper understanding. When he met her she admonished him:

What if you have become a devotee of the Lord?

The Inner Refuge is beyond your ken;
Never have you turned your gaze Spiritward!
What use is your godly talk till then?

Your Self you have never found;
I-ness has you in its iron grip.
Yet, unmindful of your own failure,
You question us about our roots.

² Quoted in *The Mountain Path*, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 199, in a review of my book *Teachings of Jnanadeva*.

She also wrote for him :

All form is forever permeated with formlessness.

Shape it has none, but enveloped in Maya

The devotee does with form endow

The all-pervading Boundless That within.

Such was the celestial group of which one, the sweeper Chokha, proclaimed :

'God neither has form nor is without form.'

Another, the servant-girl Janabai, felt that she 'ate God, drank God, slept on God and carried on all her activities with God.'

Namdev died in 1350. He desired his ashes to be buried under the doorstep to the main entrance of the temple of Vitobha at Pandharpur³ so that all devotees who went there might bless him with their holy feet.

* * * *

The next great saint of this galaxy was Eknath (1533-'99). He taught that bhakti and jnana are like flower and fruit, incon-



Eknath

ceivable in separation. He carried on the tradition of Jnaneshwar and Namdev. The text of the Jnaneshwari had become corrupted, so he re-edited it, and his recension has remained current to the present day. He was both scholar and poet, and his verse exposition of Chapter XI of the Bhagavata is as illuminating and as popular as the

Jnaneshwari. His copious and varied compositions (including folk-songs called 'Bharudas') have enriched Marathi literature with their unique quality.

Eknath had a contemporary, Father Stephens, an English Jesuit from Oxford, living in Goa, who composed a *Christa Purana* in Marathi distinctly reminiscent of Eknath's *Bhagavata*.

There are many sayings that bring out the pure advaitic understanding of Eknath. "My body is Pandhari"³ he says, "and Atma is Vitthala⁴ therein." And again: "When I bathe in the river the water is liquid Consciousness!"

He was famed for his never-ending patience as well as for his tolerance and compassion. He was carrying holy water for his worship but gave it to a thirsty donkey. On the anniversary of his ancestors he called an untouchable for food and gave him the consecrated dishes prepared for the Brahmins.

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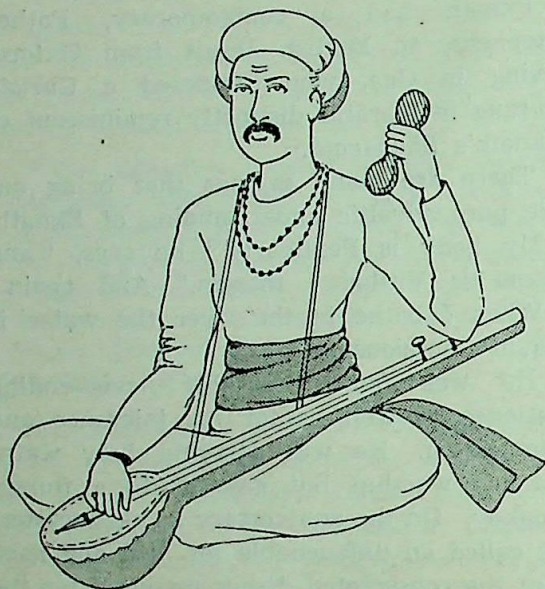
The next great figure in this dynasty, Tukaram, (1608-'50) was a peasant trader by profession but ranks as the crown of Maratha sainthood after Jnaneshwara. The woman poet Bahinabai speaks of him as the steeple or pinnacle of the edifice whose foundation Jnaneshwara had laid. Rameshwar, a contemporary disciple, declared that "in jnana, bhakti and vairagya (dispassion) there was no one to match Tukaram." Even to-day his songs sway our emotions as they did his contemporaries.

The secret lies in the rustic simplicity and utter frankness on self-revelation in his songs together with their profound understanding and ardent devotion. He had not an easy life. He could not get up any interest in trade, with the result that he and his family often went hungry, and his wife developed into a scold, as well she might. The local Brahmins declared that, being of low caste, he had no right to compose poems and ordered him to throw them into the river flowing through the town. Obediently

³ Pandhari or Pandharpur, a place of pilgrimage in Maharashtra.

⁴ God.

he did so, but the waters washed them ashore undamaged. Abashed by this, his critics allowed them to be kept.



Tukaram

He rose above body-consciousness while still in the body. In a well known poem he declares: "I witnessed with my own eyes my bodily death. That was indeed a unique sacrament!" He started (like his prototype Namdev) as an ordinary devotee of God as Vitthala but attained transcendent experience "I went to see God and there stood transfigured into God," he says.

He is one of those rare saints who have disappeared bodily at the end of life. Since there was no body to entomb there is no shrine to him to which pilgrims can repair. Instead they go to the spot on the river bank where his poems were washed ashore. There is a beautiful atmosphere there.

* * * *

Apart from this fraternity of saints centred around Pandharpur, there were two other contemporaries of Tukaram who were eminent Marathi poet-saints. One of them was a Muslim faqir, Sheikh Muhammed, whose tomb at Ahmednagar became a place of pilgrimage for Muslims and Hindus alike. The other was Samarth Ramdas, the powerful inspirer of Shivaji, whose shrine is at Sajjangad in Satara District.

Sheikh Muhammed is chiefly remembered today for his *Yoga-Sangrama*, a long allegory in songs describing the spiritual struggle as a 'battle of yoga'. He confesses: "I do not know refined speech. Cultured pandits may laugh at my uncouth expression. But look into the core and understand my soul." Like Kabir he understood the basic unanimity of the religions and he could have said with Kabir: "Ram and Rahim, Ishwar and Allah, are all the same." He regarded all sadhus as the same and as not other than the Absolute, whatever their external forms or religions. "The peel of the jackfruit is rough and prickly but the pulp inside is sweet. The shell of the coconut is hard and rough, but the milk and kernel inside are delicious." He also said: "There is no difference between Paramatma and saint. They are essentially the same although they appear different." Tukaram said in almost the same words:



Samartha Ramdas

"All saints are the same. They appear different only in externals, just as milk is all the same though it comes from cows of different colour."

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Samartha Ramdas also said the same : "Sadhus look different, but, merged in Self, they are all manifestations of the One Real." What distinguished him from the Pandharpur group of saints was that, unlike them, he was interested in the national life also. He became the Guru of Shivaji and inspired the freedom struggle against Aurangzebe. His *Das-Bodha* is a Marathi classic of rare merit. Though composed in the *ovi* metre, it has the terseness and forthrightness of vigorous prose. Its pragmatism is impregnated with the highest spiritual values. It inculcates Vedanta in the practical terms of work-a-day life. Its code of enlightened conduct covers all social classes and applies to both ruler and ruled.

The message and mission of Ramdas were summed up in the meaningful phrase 'Maharashtra-Dharma'. His work contained that mixture of realism and intuition which are so characteristic of Maharashtra through the ages. In fact, his *Das-Bodha* with Tukaram's *Gatha* or Book of Songs and the *Jnaneshwari* can be looked upon as the 'Triple Veda' of Maharashtra down to this day. Their appeal is both to the head and heart. They are couched in a form which some might consider more like rhythmical prose than verse. But they are all alike embodiments of *Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram*—'Truth, Purity, Beauty'. The Truth must be experienced, and these had experienced it and could indicate it for others to experience.

Liberation from what?

By WEI WU WEI

It is commonly imagined that we are now 'bound' and may be 'liberated' by 'enlightenment', remaining as ourselves but mysteriously 'freed' and 'illuminated'.

But we are constantly told by the Masters that it is not so, that there is nothing attainable by 'us' etc. etc. Apparently this is not adequately explained for it is still generally supposed that 'we' as such can just wake up to find that 'we' are free. So this must be nonsense — and the statements denying it cannot have been understood.

The 'do-er' suffers *karma* (the effect whose cause is volitional 'action') because he 'thinks' that 'he' is the do-er. When he understands that 'he' is not, that there is no do-er, nor any deed done, but only a phenomenal do-ing, he is said to be free, 'liberated' from 'his' supposed bondage.

But the bondage is only a 'supposed' bondage because 'he' as such was never there to be 'bound'. 'His' liberation is not

liberation from any thing whatsoever other than from the idea of himself — is not liberation from 'responsibility' for instance — but only from the supposition that he existed to *have* 'responsibility'.

'Liberated', he is then no longer present as 'himself' to think himself 'bound'!

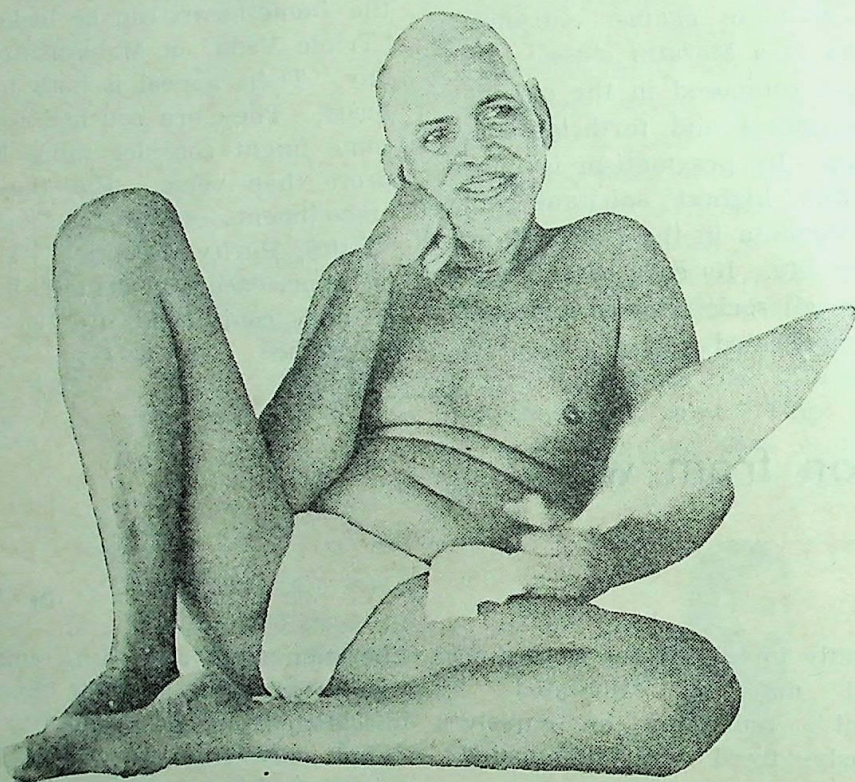
'He' remains as an appearance in mind as long as 'his' apparent life is being lived in space-time, but as such 'he' is entirely dreamed or 'lived' — which is bound by *karma* — as long as that condition appears to subsist.

'Liberation' is only liberation from the notion of 'himself' as an autonomous individual factually existing in a veritable space-time universe.

This is why both the Maharshi (in the last three of the "Forty Verses") and the Ch'an masters of Buddhism insist that 'liberation' is liberation from the idea of 'liberation', i.e. of there being anybody to be liberated.

KNOWING AND BEING

By
G. L. N.



THE worldly man seeing the world thinks, "I see so many things. What are they composed of and what is their origin?" His conception of the origin is the primal unitary state of matter from which the diverse worldly things have evolved. It stops there. He is not concerned with the entity (i.e. Self) who is seeing the world and making its research. But for the Jnani who is well-established in Self, there is consciousness of worldly existence because he exists.

In the above we have come across the terms, existence and consciousness which latter is the same as awareness or knowledge. Bhagavan Ramana's works, *Upadesa Saram* and *Ulladu Nārpadu* deal extensively with them. Sri Bhagavan teaches that existence and knowledge are one and the

same. Existence and knowledge are abstract terms and attributes of the existing thing. He says the existing thing is knowledge.

At the outset, Bhagavan eschews the idea of Soonya, that is void, or non-existence. Void is always void. Void cannot breed anything. Because we see the world, there cannot be non-existence. No one denies his own existence, even during sleep. Above all, even to advocate non-existence, there must be awareness of it. So there is awareness or knowledge and not non-existence.

We say a table exists, only when we are aware or when we know that it is there. We can predicate existence, only when we have knowledge of it. But knowledge has to exist first before existence of anything

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can be predicated. That is, its existence is dependent on knowledge. So knowledge is one only.

What is the existing thing which is one? Who is it that is making this query? It is 'I'. Though there may be many bodies everyone says 'I'. The personality to which the expression 'I' refers, the Self in each individual body cannot be many, as may first appear. The experience of everyone is of one self only and no one denies his existence even during sleep. There can not be many existing selves. The existing Self is only one. Also, the existing thing which is knowledge is one. So, the existing thing which is knowledge is Self. Self is knowledge.

What is knowledge? We are conversant with only worldly knowledge pertaining to the objects of the world. It is relative. When I say I know Rama, it means I was ignorant of him previously. Relative knowledge and relative ignorance always coexist. Further relative knowledge is not continuous. It is absent in sleep. The world and knowledge (relative) of the world rise and set together.

Real knowledge (Self) is the basis for the above relative knowledge and relative ignorance. The joint rising and setting of the

world and worldly knowledge, the passing of the three states of Jagrat (waking), Swapna (dream) and Sushupti (sleep) take place in the arena of Self. This is going on eternally in Self which, being one, is naturally eternal and infinite. Self is the eternal knower or seer of this world drama.

It may be asked why this world drama is taking place in Self. Self, we have seen, is knowledge. The inseparable components of knowledge are knower, knowing and the known. Unless these three exist, knowledge cannot be attributed to Self. Since Self is one the three also must be one. Because Self is knowledge there are these three aspects. In worldly parlance, the knower is the ego in the body, knowing is relative, when related to worldly objects and absolute when abiding in self, and the known is the world. Really all these are one, the Self. In the experience of the Jnani established in the Self, there is no diversity but unity of experience, of Self only in all.

But our experience is diverse. Why is it so? It is due only to ignorance of the reality and nature of the Self and our false identification with the body. The works of Sri Bhagavan, *Who am I?* and others deal with how to overcome this ignorance to realize and be the Self.

Inaction

By G. N. Daley

Inaction is not inactivity. Thinking, feeling and doing are only inaction when there is no attachment to thinking, feeling and doing. If there is attachment this is time: In action (non-attachment) is NOW. Inaction is BEING. Those are the facts, the choice is yours to die or live in time or to BE AND LIVE NOW.

THE YAKSHA PRASNA (concluded)

From THE MAHABHARATA

(Based largely on the annotated translation of K. Balasubramania Iyer published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.)

Yaksha

82. What is the characteristic of tapas ?
83. What is known as *dama* (self-control) ?
84. What is said to be the greatest patience ?
85. What is honoured as modesty ?

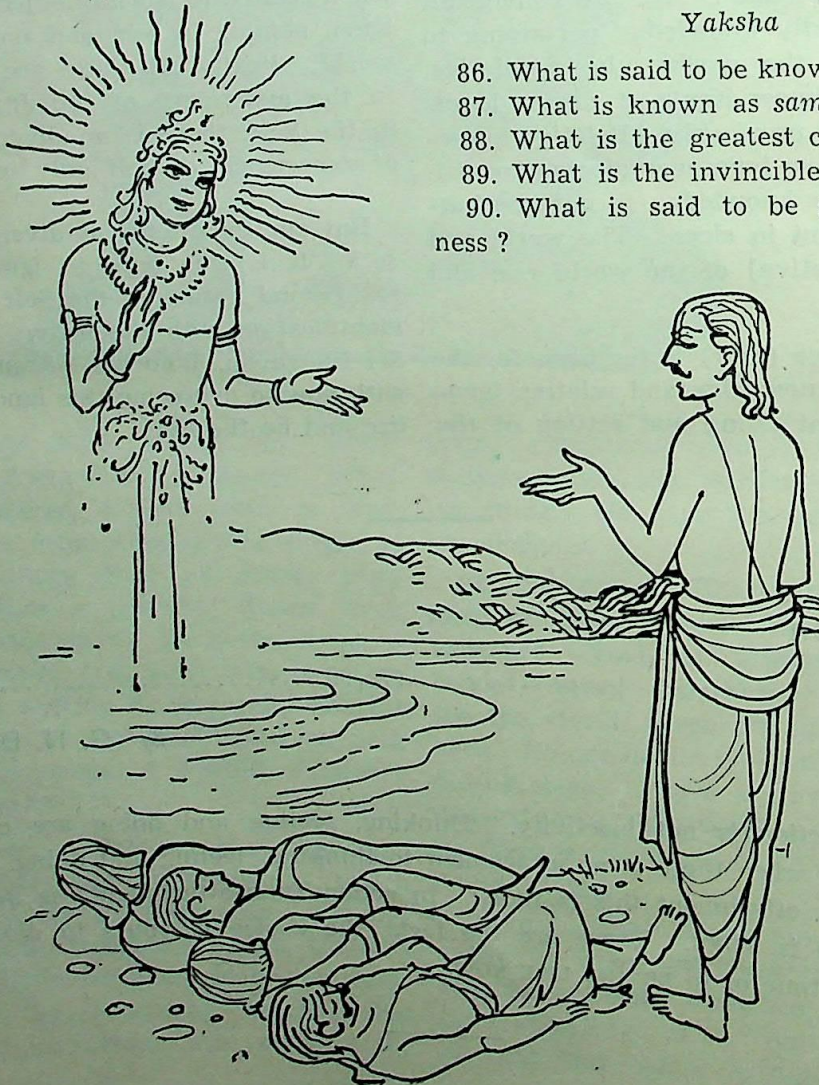
Yudhishtira

82. Following one's own dharma is tapas.
83. Mind control is self-control.
84. Putting up with the pairs of opposites is the greatest patience.
85. Shunning improper conduct is modesty.

Sri Krishna twice insists in the Gita on the importance of following one's own dharma, even though that of another seems preferable.

Yaksha

86. What is said to be knowledge, O King ?
87. What is known as *sama* ?
88. What is the greatest compassion ?
89. What is the invincible foe of man ?
90. What is said to be straightforwardness ?



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91. What is the incurable disease ?
 92. Who can be called a good person ?
 93. Who can be called a bad person ?

Yudhishtira

86. Knowledge is understanding the meaning of things.
 87. *Sama* is peace of mind.
 88. The greatest compassion is to desire the happiness of all.
 89. Anger is man's invincible foe.
 90. Straightforwardness is equal-mindedness towards all.
 91. Avarice is the incurable disease.
 92. One who seeks the good of all may be called good.
 93. And one who has no compassion may be called bad.

Yaksha

94. What, O King, is meant by delusion ?
 95. What is pride ?
 96. What can be called indolence ?
 97. What is known as misery ?

Yudhishtira

94. Ignorance of dharma is delusion.
 95. Thinking highly of oneself is pride.
 96. Neglecting one's dharma is indolence.
 97. Spiritual ignorance (*ajnana*) is misery.

Yaksha

98. What is the steadfastness (*sthairya*) spoken of by Sages ?
 99. What is meant by courage (*dhairya*) ?
 100. What is known as the best ablution (*snana*) ?
 101. What is meant by charity (*dana*) ?

Yudhishtira

98. Adherence to one's own dharma is steadfastness.
 99. Control of the senses is courage.
 100. Getting rid of the impurities of the mind is the best ablution.
 101. Extending protection to all is charity.

With regard to this last answer, it is to be remembered that Yudhishtira was a Kshatriya whose special dharma was protection of the oppressed.

Yaksha

102. Who is to be considered a learned man (*pandita*) ?
 103. Who can be called an atheist ?
 104. Who is a fool ?
 105. What is desire (*kama*) ?
 106. What is envy ?

Yudhishtira

102. One who knows dharma can be considered learned.
 103. } An atheist is a fool.
 104. }
 105. Desire is the cause of rebirth.
 106. Envy is heart-burning.

It will be seen that Yudhishtira makes the second and third questions answer each other. One is reminded of the Biblical saying: "The fool hath said in his heart, 'there is no God'." Actually the Sanskrit word *nastika* (atheist) means rather one who does not believe in a non-material world.

The word translated here as 'rebirth' is *samsara*. It is only as long as there is craving for something that one can be drawn back to some form of rebirth.

Yaksha

107. What is said to be the ego-sense ?
 108. What is called conceit ?
 109. What is known as the greatest destitute ?
 110. What is meant by slander ?

Yudhishtira

107. The ego-sense is complete ignorance.
 108. Parading one's dharma is conceit.
 109. The highest destiny comes from giving (*dana*).
 110. Slander is speaking ill of others.

Ahankara, the ego-sense, means believing oneself to be a separate individual being and is defined as *maha ajnana* or *avidya*, the supreme ignorance.

Yaksha

111. Dharma, artha (prosperity) and kama (desires or pleasure) are mutually antagonistic (and yet are all legitimate goals in life). How can they co-exist when they are contrary by nature ?

Yudhishtira

111. When one's wife is in accord with dharma the three can co-exist.

Yaksha

112. Oh Lord of the Bharatas, who goes to everlasting hell? Answer quickly!

Yudhishtira

112. One who voluntarily invites a poor Brahmin and then refuses him charity goes to everlasting hell. One who imputes falsehood to the Vedas, the Dharmasastras, the Brahmins, the gods, and the rites performed for the ancestors goes to everlasting hell. One who is wealthy but refuses charity and stints himself out of avarice goes to everlasting hell.

Yaksha

113. Oh King, how does one become a Brahmin? Is it by birth or conduct or study of the Vedas, or hearing or reflecting on truth? Answer clearly.

Yudhishtira

113. Listen, venerable Yaksha! it is not birth or study or Vedic learning which makes one a Brahmin. It is quite definitely one's conduct which does. Every one should be careful about his conduct and especially a Brahmin. One whose conduct remains unsullied is not a loser, but one who gives up good conduct perishes with it. Gurus and disciples who merely study the scriptures are to be regarded as fools. Only a man of good conduct is really wise. Even one who has studied the four Vedas is to be regarded as lower than a Shudra if his conduct is bad. Only he who regularly performs the fire sacrifice and controls his senses can be called a Brahmin.

Yaksha

114. What does he gain who speaks courteously?

115. What does he gain who acts circumspectly?

116. What does he gain who makes many friends?

117. What does he gain who is devoted to dharma?

Yudhishtira

114. He who speaks courteously is liked by all.

115. He who acts circumspectly achieves success.

116. He who has many friends lives happily.

117. He who is devoted to dharma attains life's goal.

Yaksha

118. Who rejoices?

119. What is most surprising?

120. What is the path?

121. What is the news?

Answer these four questions of mine and your dead relatives will return to life.

Yudhishtira

118. Oh dweller among the waters! he who cooks vegetables in his own house every five or six days, is free from debt and does not have to go out (to work) is happy.

119. Day after day people depart to the abode of death, yet those who remain never envisage their own death. What can be more surprising than this?

120. Logic is inconclusive; the scriptures are divergent; there is no Sage whose opinion is final; the truth of dharma lies hidden; therefore the only way is to follow the path of the great.

121. In the cauldron of this illusory world time cooks beings with sun and moon and night and day as fire and fuel and with the months and seasons for ladle. This is the news.

The answer to question 120 recalls that to question 77: it is no use laying down that one path is right and others wrong; that on which one can find enlightened guidance is the one to follow.

Yaksha

122. You have rightly answered all my questions, Oh Conqueror of the Foe, but tell me now who is it that possesses all wealth?

Yudhishtira

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122. As long as one's repute fills heaven and earth one is called a man. He to whom things pleasant and unpleasant, grief and joy, past and future are alike, he it is that possesses all wealth.

This recalls the answer to question 84 and Sri Krishna's saying in the Gita: "Only men of right conduct, whose sins have come to an end, are free from the delusion of the polarities and worship me, steadfast in their vows." (VII, 28).

(THE END)

Contacting the Eternal

By Cornelia Bagarotti

UNKNOWN and unseen, woven in all things, lies the eternal. It was this that spoke through the Christ, that permeated the words of the Buddha, that inspired the teachings of all the world's great spiritual teachers. From whence came this wisdom and how is it to be found?

If man but knew it this eternal source of the Divine which we call God resides in each human heart. Each human being is a form of God, a divine expression of the Creator. No two are alike and each is sent to earth with a gift all his own. Some come bearing the gift of service, some of creative genius, some of scientific ability, some of healing. As St. Paul said in his sermon on "The Gifts of God" they are many and varied. Hidden in the heart of the most humble being lies his particular gift which is his expression of the Divine. He may never know it yet he will carry it with him doing in his daily acts of little kindness or help his part to express love on earth.

The real difference between a Christ or Buddha and an ordinary man is that the former knew of their constant and eternal union with the Divine while others are unawakened to real nature.

Light pours through a prism and separates into the tones of the rainbow. Thus God

pours into humanity and separates into the various gifts hidden in each human heart, which are manifestations not differences. To find the good in another is to discover God in him. To develop the Love and purity in oneself is to release God consciously within oneself. To serve one's fellowman is to contact God and to commune with the eternal in which all that is reveals itself as an unbroken, everlasting whole.

As a builder sends one man to cut the beams, another to lay the bricks, a third to place the pipes, a fourth to instal the wiring, a fifth to pour the cement, a sixth to raise the walls, so God emanates his Divinity in various forms on earth. Each speaks for Him, each works for Him according to his gift and no one is complete in himself and no one can do the task of his neighbor.

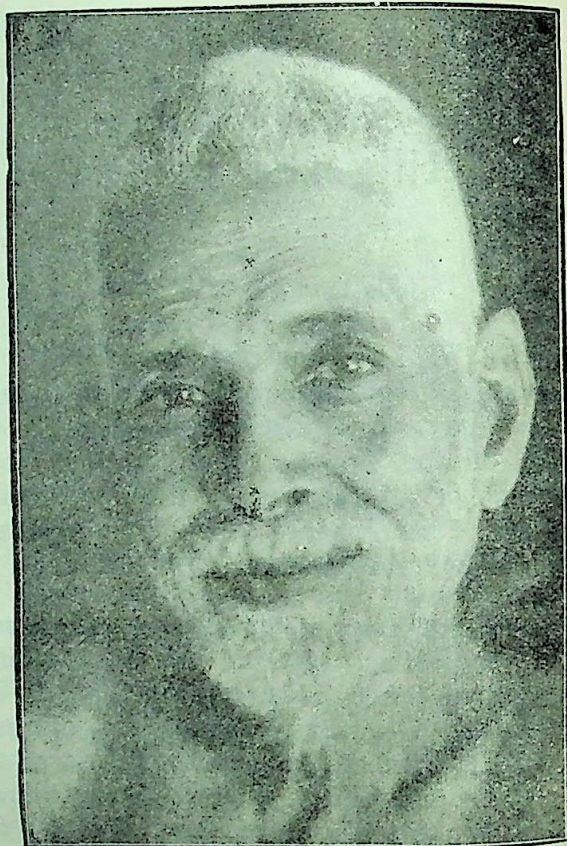
Deepest reverence fills the heart of the illumined soul as he sees God in all. Love pours into him, gratitude, humility, acceptance, selflessness and those who meet him find in him the reflection of the eternal. Such a one illumines others and has become at one with his creator. Sri Ramana Maharshi was such a one. Some call such men incarnations of God, others channels of God. Whatever they may be called they show other men how to contact the eternal which lies in every human heart.

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By
S. S. COHEN¹

TO write on *How I came to Bhagavan* one has to be somewhat autobiographical, a venture which many a sadhaka feels hesitant to undertake. In the first instance one has to take special care to be objective. Secondly 'coming' to Bhagavan, in some cases, is the result of much soul stirring, which is too intimate to be spoken about. I said "in some cases" because many people do "come" with some material expectation, which has very little of the soul in it, that His Grace might grant them the fulfilment of their hearts' desire, and when that does take place they get trapped and remain His devotees for life. It is interesting to observe how the very trials and tribulations which constantly dog men's heels in life become the cause of their redemption in the presence of a great Master.

But my case was different: it was the result of a twenty-year-long quest for the Guru, a quest which was sparked by what then appeared a mere accident. I was only eighteen when a strange book fell in my hands. I call it strange, because in a country—Turkish Mesopotamia and now the Republic of Iraq—to which very few books had access (in 1914), this book appeared to be a phenomenon. It was *Esoteric Buddhism* by A. P. Sinnet, which I first took for a book on magic. I devoured it and was captured by it; the very sound of its oriental terms—*Kamaloka*, *lingasharira*, *devachan*, *anupadhaka* and what not—had the effect of abracadabra, of a soothing incantation on me, and haunted me for many weeks. What is worse, it gave a fresh play to my adolescent imagination. I fancied that the Theosophical Masters were living behind walls of fire in a mysterious land called Tibet, shedding their benign rays on the whole of mankind, guiding and protecting it in a multitude of ways, and that none had access to them but their own "Initiates",



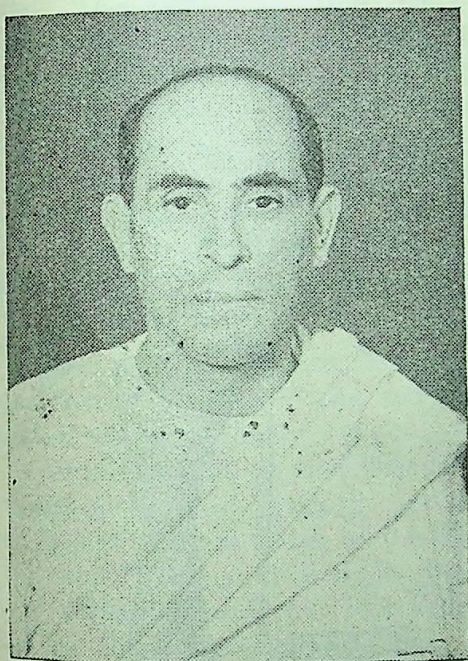
who live in the world disguised as ordinary men. I vowed in my heart that if I met one of them I would give up the world and follow him. But fancy apart, this book opened up a vista of life for me for now and for evermore.

The long duration, the devastation and the universal suffering caused by the first world war effaced much of this romantic picture from my mind till ten years later I found myself in India nursing a friend who had made a fortune on the stock exchange and had lost it overnight for ever. He was in danger of losing his life or reason. I racked my brain to find something with which to console him, when, lo, *Esoteric Buddhism* buoyed up from the

¹ Introduced in our issue of April, 1967, p. 173.

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depths of my memory. It acted like a charm on him: he revived but without his money. Yet he felt compensated for his loss by the wealth of knowledge that this Theosophical creed placed at his disposal. In a few days he became a registered F.T.S. (Fellow of the Theosophical Society), brimming with enthusiasm at the prospect of developing clairvoyance, clairaudience, and all the known *siddhis* through the help of the "Elder Brothers".



S. S. Cohen

I joined later, wound up my affairs in Bombay, and went to live in the International Headquarters of the Society in Madras. My studies slowly led me to the Vedantic literature which I found to be the most congenial to my way of thinking. The short aphorisms—the 2nd and 3rd—of Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras* completed my total conversion. When I read that suppression of thinking will cause the seer to abide in himself, I felt at last I was face to face with the Truth, the one and only Truth. Neither science nor philosophy had so far succeeded in finding this Truth, and their confusion

increases with the increase in scientific discoveries. When science used to shout that there is no effect without a cause, its recent discovery of ceaseless appearance from nowhere of a *gas* consisting of hydrogen atoms in interstellar space, which was supposed to be empty, at the rate of $100 \times 1,000,000$ tons per second to form new galaxies, made the scientists throw up their hands and cry that they are as far from truth as ever.

As for Religion, whilst it demands absolute faith, it is unable to support its claims to truth by unequivocally pointing out the way to it, or presenting its most devout ministers as having "direct knowledge of it. Instead it wraps itself up in sacrosanct dogmas and moral precepts which make the Reality appear so vague and so remote that the soul of the seeker, who yearns for immediate experience, remains dissatisfied and hungry for it. Vedanta seemed to me to offer the greatest possibilities in that direction. My only need was then the guidance of one who himself had that experience and thus could with authority and competence lead to it. For five years, five long years I waited in Madras, but not a word, not a whisper did I hear of Bhagavan, who lived a stone's throw, as it were, from me. Another five years had to pass ere this information was vouchsafed to me, when an old friend, without knowing what she was doing, posted me a copy of *Search in Secret India*, which brought me post haste from 1000 miles farther away from Madras to Ramanashram in February 1936. What happened then and later I have recorded elsewhere.² Suffice it to say here that, having come, having felt the power and beauty of his Presence, having experienced the guidance that radiated from him, I knew that the search for a path and a guide was now ended. It was up to me now to follow it.

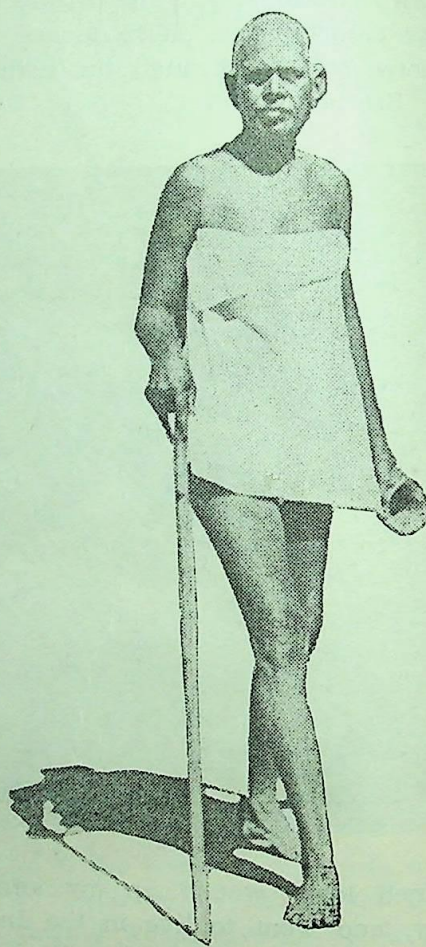
² *Guru Ramana* by the author, published by Sri Ramanasramam.

SRI RAMANA-YOGA-SADHANA

By
Prof. N. R. KRISHNAMURTI AIYER

TOTAL absorption of the ego in the Self is realization. Ego is consciousness which has identified itself with the body, and, "I-am-the-body" is the experience thereof. The ego sees the world of souls and inanimate objects, gets involved in them, experiences varying degrees of pleasure and pain, suffers from hopes and fears, and, in the extremities of anguish and despair, appeals to God for succour with varying degrees of success in proportion to its devotion to that Supreme Power. Dreamless deep sleep which is free from thoughts of body, soul, world and God, is impregnated with joy of peace which may be clearly recollected after waking. The joy lasts for the duration of the blotting out of the ego and its activities, during deep sleep and is remembered after waking.

Sri Ramana declares that the blissful peace enjoyed in deep dreamless sleep is our essential nature, and that it can be consciously experienced while one is awake, if strenuous effort be made to root out the ego by self-enquiry "Who am I?". When the inner search for "I" is made, all thoughts disappear, and the ego may get merged not in its true state of Bliss but only in a state of torpor (*laya*) which is akin to sleep, only to emerge again into a dream or wakeful state with all the previous thoughts of body and world. By repeated enquiry "Who am I?" this can be checked. The ego's thought-generating faculty and also its tendency to slip into *laya*, and its identification with the body are progressively weakened. After long and strenuous practice of self-enquiry the ego with its associated thoughts gets eliminated and only the effortless experience of pure Being-Awareness-Bliss remains. This is Self-Realization. It is a most intimate experience, free from trace of thought, beyond expression, charged with all power and



bliss as evidenced in Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. It is this living experience that has exalted Ramana into a Sad-Guru.

Ramana-Sad-Guru is potent and alive in His Samadhi or Shrine at Sri Ramanasramam. He abides as a powerful force in the hearts of His devotees. If we invoke His Grace as Sad-Guru with all love and humility, our effort at Self-enquiry is powerfully helped towards success. Not all the precious books of philosophy written from the remotest periods of history till now, not all the intricate and subtle feats of intellectual acrobatics of great scholars recorded in

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them, can take the place of the Sad-Guru evidenced in Sri Ramana. Whole tons of literature emanating from such paper philosophers may be squeezed dry, and one may not get the tiniest drop of spiritual experience for all the trouble. The one essential condition for Self-Realization is the hard effort of stilling the vagrant mind with the indispensable help of the Sad-Guru by our heart's devotion.

What then must sincere sadhakas do? As children we shall approach Sad-Guru-Ramana. Let us sit still before His Samadhi. If we are not fortunate enough to command the funds, leisure, and the convenience to go to His Ashram at Tiruvannamalai, let us sit still in the quiet of our chamber with Sri Bhagavan's picture before us. Let us still our minds by the enquiry "Who am I?" whenever we find a period of respite from our daily avocations.

In one of his compositions, Sri Bhagavan declares that if activity of the body, speech and mind are consciously reduced to zero (as in deep sleep it is *unconsciously*) the Self shines forth in all its glory; for this, He hastens to add that the Grace of the Supreme God (Arunachala) embodied in the Sad-Guru is necessary and must be sedulously invoked by the Sadhaka.

So, with earnest prayer to Sad-Guru-Ramana let us try to "be still", to kill all emerging thoughts by the enquiry "Who am I?", to dwell on His spoken words, and try to eliminate the various *vasanas*,¹ *deha-vasana*, *loka-vasana* and *sastra-vasana*, while limiting ourselves to the essential activities of our avocations in life. By the grace of the Sad-Guru we shall find that Self-Realization is not impossible to achieve even in this lifetime.

For this Guru-Bhakti is the essential condition. In the immortal words of the great religious teacher Sri Shankara-Bhagavat-Pada,

"Of what use, of what use, of what use, O of what use (is all this sadhana and all its achievements) if the mind is not bound in devotion to the Lotus-Feet of the Sad-Guru, if the mind does not ever abide in the Spoken Word of the Sad-Guru!"

— (From Sri Shankara's *Guruashtakam*).

¹ *Deha-vasana* — Tendency to thoughts regarding the body.

Loka-vasana — Tendency to thoughts regarding the world.

Sastra-vasana — Tendency to thoughts regarding booklore leading to endless intellectual discussion.

A traveller in a cart has fallen asleep. The bullocks move, stand still or are unyoked during the journey. He does not know these events but finds himself in a different place after he wakes up. He has been blissfully ignorant of the occurrences on the way, but the journey has been finished. Similarly with the Self of a person. The ever-wakeful Self is compared to the traveller asleep in the cart. The waking state is the moving of the bulls; Samadhi is their standing still (because Samadhi means *Jagrat-sushupti*, that is to say, the person is aware but not concerned in the action: the bulls are yoked but do not move); sleep is the unyoking of the bulls for there is complete stopping of activity corresponding to the relief of the bulls from the yoke.

— BHAGAVAN.

THE PURANAS

By
MADGUNI SHAMBU BHAT

THE Puranas form a compendium of Sanskrit literature — call it 'scripture' if you will — enshrining traditional Aryan culture in colourful and vigorous poetry where spiritual and ethical teaching, symbolism and even history combine. Western scholars of an earlier century, puzzled by this type of literature, of which the symbolism was beyond them and the history often appeared dubious, were apt to dismiss them with the lofty scorn then held for literature in which rationalism was transcended. Through the centuries they have been widely popular in India, though with the present waning of tradition they are fast losing their hold.

The word 'Purana' means 'ancient' and may be taken to imply that they are ancient traditional compilations. There are eighteen major ones as listed in the *Devi Bhagavatam*, ranging in length from 9,000 to 81,000 two-line stanzas, and eighteen minor ones, not all of which are still extant. Their style is exceedingly varied, ranging from the conversational to the narrative, from the narrative to the spiritual. They are said to have been composed by the great Veda Vyasa who compiled the Vedas and wrote the *Mahabharata* and the *Brahma Sutras*. This implies that they were part of the vast reorganization of tradition which was carried out in the epic age.

They are by nature popular literature, intended for those for whom the Vedas were too abstruse, and therefore there was never any ban on their being read by social strata to whom the Vedas were closed. Perhaps for this reason they have not received anything like the same veneration as the Vedas. For understanding certain of them the reader needs a natural understanding of symbolism, which is a thing that cannot be learnt from books. Three concepts which

are fundamental to them are those of time, space and energy. Let us first consider the measurement of time. Nowhere has it been carried to greater dimensions of the vast and the minute.

The *kala chakra* or time cycle is considered unending, whirling round through alternate phases of *srishti* and *pralaya* or creation and dissolution which invite comparison with modern astronomical conceptions. At the other extreme the smallest unit, known as the *lava*, is described as half the winking of an eye. This is followed by *prahara*, equal to three hours, the day and night, and then the bright and dark fortnights (counted incidentally from full moon to no moon and no moon to full moon not, as might be expected, from half moon to half moon). Then there are three seasons in the year (hot, wet and cold) and twelve solar months. There are four *yugas* and beyond them the *mahayuga*, the *manvantaras* and finally the *kalpa* extending from one cosmic dissolution to the next.

The spatial, or, more properly, cosmic, scheme postulates the *sishumara chakra* or cosmic sphere with the pole star and the seven stars that revolve around it, the sun and moon and planets and the other stars. Like the cosmological concepts of other religions, it postulates seven higher and seven lower worlds which are not in fact spatial or territorial but refer to higher and lower states of being through which one can pass. Nevertheless the sense of magnitude is so developed that there are said to be millions of worlds in space.

These vast concepts of cyclic time and space are accompanied by the concept of illimitable energy, power or *shakti*. The fact that this was personified should not bind us to its reality. According to the view-

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point it is spoken of in a personalised or an impersonal way.

Basically it is held that in order to rank as a Purana a work must contain the five features of: *sarga*, *pratisarga*, *vamsa*, *manvantara* and *vamsanucharita*. So let us see what these are.

Sarga: description and explanation of the spontaneous working of the three fundamental forces, that is: creation, preservation and destruction, expressed in *rajas* (activity), *sattva* (purity) and *tamas* (darkness) respectively and personified as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva with their Shaktis or consorts Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati (or Kali).^{1, 2}

Pratisarga: symbolical stories of the birth of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara (or Siva) who conduct the dance or game of manifestation through the powers mentioned above.

Vamsa: accounts of the various avatars or divine incarnations of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara who become actors in the world play.

Manvantara: accounts of the time factor from a single second to the end of the world.

Vamsanucharita: accounts of the kings and dynasties on the human stage.

The necessity for these five ingredients implies that there is a considerable amount of repetition in the Puranas. However even

the repetition is not haphazard but is based on a definite intellectual plan to provide each type of reader with the sort of presentation most likely to appeal to him. Mankind are divided into the three basic types of *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* and these are further subdivided according to the temperamental preponderance of the six human tendencies of: *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (grasping), *moha* (delusion, infatuation), *mada* (impulsiveness) and *matsarya* (envy, jealousy). These vary endlessly in their proportions but they give eighteen Puranas.

Many have complained that the Puranas are confused. It is because they themselves are vague as to the purpose of the Puranas and what they propose to supply. Their main purpose is not to provide a historical record. They may do this incidentally, but their purpose is much more sublime, in fact nothing less than the one true purpose of providing spiritual teaching. Only they do this in such a way as to make it attractive to the reader. The stories—some historical, some symbolical, some both—are dressed up in poetry of a high order and interspersed with ethical and spiritual instruction. They thus appealed through the ages to many whom pure doctrine left cold.

¹ Siva as *tamas* represents a profounder possibility not connected with physical darkness or mental inertia but with the hidden truth of the Unmanifest.

² Equivalent three aspects are represented in Western astrology by the three modes: cardinal, mutable and fixed, respectively.

This I am

.....

By L. P. Yandell

One who knows himself as 'me' looks about and sees what is wrong.
 One who is less 'me' sees more that is right.
 One who knows himself as THIS both sees what is
 and is the seeing.

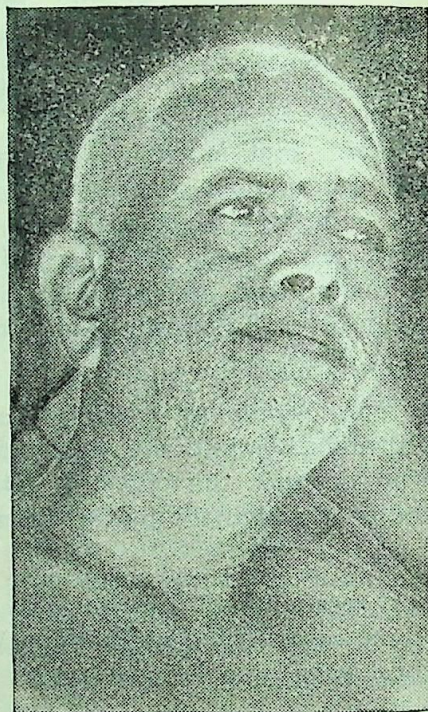
IS IT NOT DIVINE LOVE?

By
R. NARAYANA IYER¹

AT first it was not thirst for Self-Realization or spiritual development that impelled me and drew me to Sri Bhagavan. In fact there was a background of scepticism and incredulity. The first impression was more or less a mental conviction, some thing like that which we have towards a deity in a temple symbolised by an idol. It gave me no spiritual insight. "Somehow or other he appears to have discovered some truth, perhaps like Buddha under the Bodhi tree", I thought. But I loved him and longed to be in his company as much as possible. I felt a rapturous delight in hearing him talk. I was in the prime of youth, recently married and placed in a respectable Government job and I was happy and satisfied with life as it was. I was in no need of the solace of religion or spirituality. Yet I could not leave him and the first impression of his beaming face, sweet smile and endearing talk always danced before my eyes drawing me from my usual routine and pursuits. I arranged with the Doctor who first took me to Sri Bhagavan to pay monthly visits to the Ashram of three days, namely the penultimate Saturday, Sunday and a day's casual leave out of the fifteen days available to me in a year.²

This arrangement worked for a few years. Then this doctor friend, who was so free and familiar in the Ashram as to move about and to conduct himself as a regular inmate, doing work in the kitchen and elsewhere, introduced me also to the same privilege and the opportunities it gave to be in close contact with Sri Bhagavan, who presided over and participated in all kinds of kitchen work with the proficiency and ease of an expert—a regular Nala in the culinary art!

Well, I seemed caught in a net! The more I was with him, the more I wanted to be with him. But I was shortly transferred



to Arni, another town within the same radius of thirty miles. Here I missed the company of the doctor friend. Losing all delight in all other things I turned the monthly visits to the Ashram to weekly ones, coupling Sundays with other holidays. And I was always welcome to the Ashram.

I used to translate from Tamil to English Sri Bhagavan's replies to letters received by him. On one occasion, when Bhagavan was talking very fast, I asked him to wait a little and took up a paper and pencil to write down what he was saying. Upon this he said: "Well, well, you write what you are able to. If I begin to dictate they would want to print it. There will be no end to it." Like an ass carrying a load of camphor I had no idea of all that I wrote or listened to.

¹ Introduced to our readers in Jan. '68 issue, p. 83.

² See his article on *How he came to Bhagavan* in our April '68 issue, p. 142.

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By this time I had made friends with the attendants, Sri Madhavaswami, Sri Satyanandaswami, Sri Krishnaswami, Sri Rangaswami and others, and they did not protest when I gradually introduced personal services to Sri Bhagavan, such as massaging his legs, fomentations, etc. For there were occasions when his muscles became rigid or painful. His physical work like cutting vegetables and directing the work of the kitchen was generally confined to the early hours of the morning when only the residents were present. After 5 a.m. during the *Vedapārāyanam* or when visitors came from the outside, he would be on his couch in the hall sitting there or just reclining like a statue cut in alabaster or like one posing for a painter or sculptor. Sitting and sitting like this all day made his muscles hard and inflexible and required some massage. Thus by slow degrees a sort of familiarity and intimacy grew up between me and Bhagavan.

During one of my visits I stayed outside the hall for about half an hour and when I entered the hall Sri Bhagavan remarked: "What is this? You are not at all to be seen." Although it was I that chose to render personal service he seemed to have assumed the role of a master with complete control over my programme and to decide what I should do and how I should spend my time. Anything out of the way, like a stroll into the town, etc., was done only after seeking his permission. Although I had not bargained for this surrender of freedom, I yielded to him as there was such love, love unmistakable.

One morning at about 5 I prostrated before Bhagavan and took leave of him. There had been some function like Jayanti or Mahapuja the previous day and all were tired and asleep. Sri Bhagavan said: "Wait" and went into the kitchen. I followed. He searched and found nothing to give me. He then put his hand inside a pot and found some almonds. He immediately lit the fire, put a pan on it, fried the almonds in ghee and gave them to me. Though I protested he gave me a big packet of them and asked me to eat them on my

way and to give some to the children at home! Is this not divine love?

Sometimes when I came and prostrated before him an attendant would run up and fetch me a packet of some rare dish of groundnuts or something special served during the midday meal. I would be told by the attendant that Bhagavan wanted "a little of it to be kept for Narayana Iyer who would be coming in the evening." Oh! What have I done to deserve such kindness and attention? Tears trickle down my cheeks as I write this at such a distance of time.

Once I asked Bhagavan: "Bhagavan, you left your home in Madurai where your relatives had been treating you with love and kindness and spending money upon your education. You misappropriated their money for your train fare to Tiruvannamalai. You sneaked your way to the Railway station so as not to be noticed by any one. You posed yourself as a pilgrim who had lost his kit. Then you saw at Tirukoilur the Holy Hill and burst into a wave of sobbing. Was all this straightforward and proper?" Sri Bhagavan was silent for a while and then replied: "This can be explained. It is said in the Kural: 'Even falsehood is akin to truth when it is unblemished good and harms none'". This shows the freedom I enjoyed with Bhagavan.

I once told Bhagavan: "I have been here for many years. People meditate and get into samadhi. I close my eyes for a minute and the mind travels round the world ten times and so many long-forgotten things come up." Upon this Bhagavan said: "Why do you concern yourself about others? They may meditate or sleep and snore. Look to yourself. Whenever the mind goes astray bring it back to the quest. There is a verse in the Bhagavad Gita which says: 'To whatever side the restless, unsteady mind wanders away one should check it and bring it back controlled to the Self'." But I was not satisfied and Sri Bhagavan said: "The child, who was woke up and given its milk after it had gone to sleep,

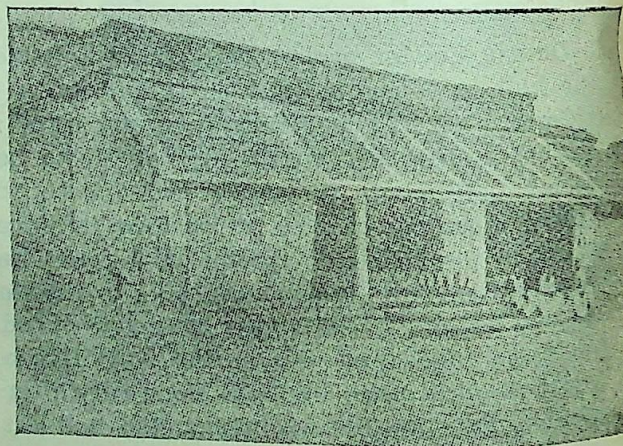
says to its mother the next morning: 'Mother, you never gave me milk last night.' Even so You had your fill." His analogy and assurance was convincing and consoling. I cannot even imagine what I would have been but for my contact with Sri Bhagavan. Countless have been the incidents which gripped my heart in bonds of ecstatic love to Him. The contact and impact that I have had with Bhagavan have been such as to make me feel that knowingly or unknowingly I must have done something in the course of my lives to deserve this unique blessing.

The lamp has been lit and 'not all the darkness of the world can extinguish the light of the burning candle.' The contact and impact will and must lead me to the right goal, the 'Be all and End all of human birth'.

Birth Place

By
T. P. R.

It was the command of Sri Bhagavan that I should go to Tiruchuzhi and see the house where Bhagavan was born. Then it was in some one else's possession. Sri Bhagavan gave me all minute details about Tiruchuzhi and what places I should see: the temple, the tower on which he played, the mantapa, the school, the tank. He particularly instructed me to meet some very old people there who would still remember him. Bhagavan also wanted to know whether pujas in the temple there continued to be performed with prasadam and other offerings on the customary scale. I had an unique experience of visiting these places and noting down all details required by Sri Bhagavan. On my return, when I gave my report in writing, Bhagavan took enormous interest in reading it aloud to devotees in the Hall. In the last para of that report I had made an appeal to Sri Chinna-swami¹ that his duty would not be complete if that house did not come into the possession of the Ashram and that it should be renovated and kept as a pilgrim centre for all Ramana-bhaktas. Sri N. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer was of great help to me in all these undertakings.



Sundara Mandiram

Thereafter Sri Chinna-swami took a lot of interest and the house² was eventually bought and now it is in the possession of the Ashram. For the purchase of the house and in a few other matters connected with it, I took very active part, for I came to know that Bhagavan was very much interested.

¹ Sri Niranjanananda Swami, brother of Sri Bhagavan and the then *Sarvadhikari*.

² The house was named by Sri Bhagavan as *Sundara Mandiram*.

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REMINDERS

By

Prof. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA¹

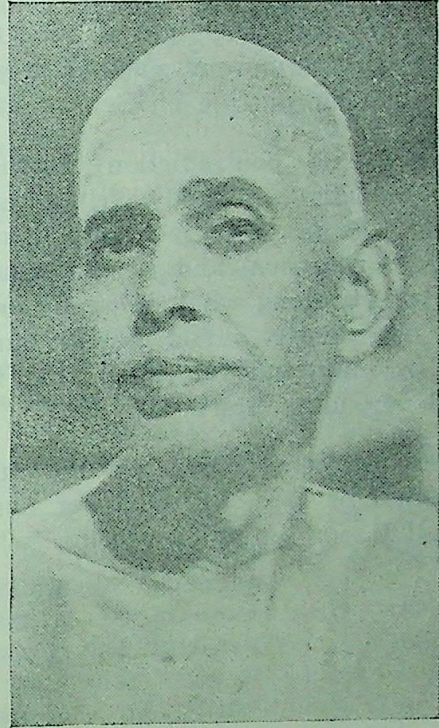
LET me recall some indications by Bhagavan that will help to keep the aspirant on the right path, safe from pitfalls. Such reminders are necessary lest, with the passage of time, the clarity of his teaching gets blurred.

The final aim and purpose of all sadhana — fasts, prayers, pilgrimages, penances, etc. — is, he reminded us, to annihilate the ego through perfect control of the mind and thereby to realize the true Self. This should be always borne in mind lest the aspirant get too attached to his technique and mistake it for the purpose when it is only the means. Any sadhana is only a road to reach the destination and never a residence.

The practice of Self-enquiry is the direct method since it directly tackles the mind, but it does not exclude other practices which may suit the particular aspirant owing to his samskaras or predispositions due to prarabha or previous destiny. All sadhanas lead to the same goal.

When we speak of Self-realization it is to be remembered that the Self is not some wonder which will drop down from the heavens before our gaze. It is not anything outside us or anything perceptible to the mind or senses. It is the real I or Self that every one of us is in fact. So Self-realization is only being what we are. This comes about on transcending the dualities (good and bad) and triads (knowledge-knower-known), when the unreal accretions of the mind disperse.

Self-enquiry is not a catechism or a mental process of question and answer. The question 'Who am I?' is not intended to provoke an answer such as 'I am this' or 'I am that' but is only a means to still the mind. When a thought arises one is not to pursue it but to ask oneself to whom it



occurs. The answer is 'to me', and this provokes the further question, 'Who am I?' With this the first thought disappears.

The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts that incessantly arise. If the above process is repeated every time a thought arises all thoughts vanish and the mind dwells solely on the basic I-thought. With sufficient practice it gets rid of its thought content and becomes transformed into the real 'I' or true Self which shines continuously of its own accord. The aspirant's effort terminates in complete stilling of the mind. What follows is automatic like the sun's shining after the clouds have passed.

Since the real Self is the repository of all power, as of everything else, the aspirant,

¹ Introduced in our issue of July '68, P. 235.

in his quest for the Self, may or may not acquire powers or siddhi. This is dependent on his prarabha or self-made destiny. In a realized Man these occur unsought and manifest themselves naturally. For an aspirant to seek them or make use of them deliberately is harmful; it is likely to strengthen his ego and thereby hamper his spiritual progress. The right attitude for him is to remain indifferent whether they come or not and concentrate on Self-realization.

There is no contradiction between so-called 'worldly' life and spiritual practice. We can remain in society, practising any trade or profession, and at the same time remember all along what we really are. We should not identify ourselves with our body, senses or mind but remember that we are the all-pervading Spirit.

Either we surrender to the Supreme Spirit, Self or God, by whatever name we may call It, or go on enquiring what we

really are until we realize our identity with It. Not only are professional work and spiritual effort not contradictory but the latter helps to perfect the former and even makes it a means of self-purification, which is a pre-requisite of Self-realization.

In conclusion, let us never forget the greatness and glory of Sri Bhagavan. At the age of seventeen He attained Self-realization by spontaneous effort, with no instruction and no outer Guru. The remainder of his life was only a 'leela' or 'play' in which the Supreme manifested its Grace by radiating his Glory and diffusing Peace and Bliss around that 'mighty Impersonality', as the poet Harindranath Chattopadhyaya once called Bhagavan (when some one else had been called a 'mighty personality'). The term 'Bhagavan' is sometimes used as a honorific title for holy personages but Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is Bhagavan in the fullest sense of the word. Glory to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi!

Devotee : Janaka was a jnani and still he ruled his dominions. Does not action require activity of the mind? What is the rationale of the working of a jnani's mind?

Maharshi : You say, 'Janaka was a jnani and yet active, etc.' Does Janaka ask the question? The question is in your mind only. The jnani is not aware of anything besides the Self. He has no doubts of the kind.

Devotee : Probably it is like a dream. Just as we speak of our dreams, so they think of their actions.

Maharshi : Even the dream, etc., is in your mind. This explanation too is in your mind only.

Devotee : Yes, I see. All is Ramana-Maya — made up of the Self.

Maharshi : If so, there will be no duality and no talk.

Devotee : A man, on realising the Self, can help the world more effectively. Is it not so?

Maharshi : If the world be apart from the Self, yes.

THE UDDHARAYANA

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

(Continued from our last issue)

There is this *akasa* (consciousness, lit, space or ether or sky) within the heart. In that there is this *purusha* (person) of the form of consciousness, immortal and golden (resplendent). What hangs down like breasts beyond the palate, is the source of Indra, where the roots of the hairs part (on the head) and split the skull. (The meditator makes, at the time of his final departure, his exit from the body through that passage) and abides in fire uttering to himself *Bhu*; he stays in the air saying *Bhuva*, in the sun saying *Suva* and in Brahman saying *Maha*. He attains sovereignty. He becomes the Lord of Mind, the Lord of Speech and the Lord of Sight, the Lord of Hearing and the Lord of Understanding. Thereafter he becomes this Brahman whose body is the *akasa*, whose essence is Truth, whose sport is the *prana* (life-force), who is the joy in the mind, and who is full of eternal peace. O Pracheenayogya, meditate in this manner.

The earth, the heavens, the space between them, the (four) quarters and the directions between them; fire, air, the sun, the moon and the stars; the waters, the herbs, the lordly trees of the forest, the sky and the body—thus the material world outside. Now for the body: the *Prana*, the *Vyana*, the *Apana*, the *Udana* and the *Samana*; the eye, the ear, the mind, the speech and the sense of touch; the skin, the flesh, the muscle, the bone and the marrow. A rishi classified in this manner and said: "All these are groups of fives. One group of five is nourished (supported) by another group of five."

Om is Brahman. Om is all this. It is well known that Om is the word of assent. By saying "Om recite" they (the priests) proceed to recite. After saying Om they chant the *samans*. After saying Om *shom* they recite the *sastras* (invocations). The *adhvaryu* (the priest who offers the oblations) responds (to the *hotr* the priest who chants the *viks*) with the syllable Om. The *Brahma* (the priest who

watches over the entire sacrifice) initiates (the sacrifice) by saying Om. By saying Om assent is given for the performance of the *Agnihotra* (a form of fire sacrifice). A *Brahmana*, before reciting "Let me truly attain Brahman", says Om. He truly attains Brahman.

(The following discipline is necessary) :— (Abiding by) the eternal law (*rtam*) and studying and teaching the scriptures ; (abiding by) truth and studying and teaching the scriptures ; austerities (*tapas*) and studying and teaching the scriptures ; control of the senses and studying and teaching the scriptures ; control of the mind and studying and teaching the scriptures ; tending the sacrificial fires and studying and teaching the scriptures ; offerings in the fire (*agnihotra*) and studying and teaching the scriptures ; entertaining guests and studying and teaching the scriptures ; social welfare and studying and teaching the scriptures ; setting up a family and studying and teaching the scriptures ; procreation and studying and teaching the scriptures ; ensuring the birth of grandchildren and studying and teaching the scriptures. Rathithara of the truthful words said that truth (was the most important discipline). Paurushishti, established in *tapas* said that *tapas* (is what is essential). Naka belonging to the lineage of Mudgala said that studying and teaching the scriptures alone (is necessary). That alone is *tapas*. That alone is *tapas*.

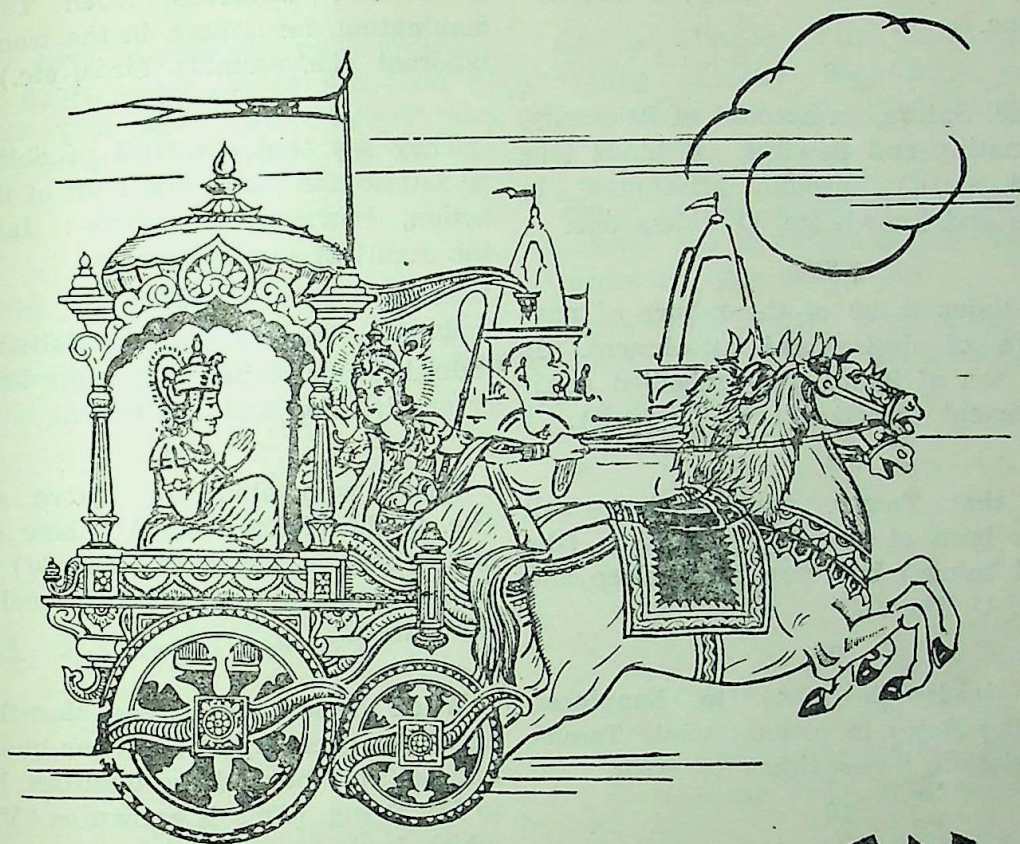
"I am the power which makes the tree (of samsara) grow. (My) glory is (high) like the top of a mountain. I am the extremely pure, immortal being as he is seen in the sun. I am the wealth of lustre. Endowed with good intellect I am imperishable and changeless". This is what Trishanku said after he became enlightened.

After teaching the Vedas the Acharya (the teacher) impresses upon the pupil thus : Speak the truth. Follow the dharma. Do not be careless about the study of the scriptures. Give the Acharya the fee that will please him. See that the line of your race is not broken. Do not be careless about truth. Do not be careless about dharma.

Do not be careless about your welfare. Do not be careless about your prosperity. Do not be careless about studying and teaching the scripture. Do not be careless about your duties to the gods and the spirits of your forefathers. Let your mother be a god(dess) to you. Let your father be a god to you. Let your Acharya be a god to you. Let your guest be a god to you. Acts which are irreproachable are to be performed, not others. The virtues found in us are to be practised by you, not others. Those Brahmanas who are superior to us are to be honoured by you with a seat. (Gifts must be) offered with reverence. (They should not be) offered without reverence. (They should be) offered generously. (They should be) offered with modesty. (They should be) offered with a sense of fear. (They should be) offered with sympathy. If you should have any doubts regarding your course of action or conduct, you should follow the Brahmanas who are on the spot, who are able to judge carefully, who are experienced, independent, not harsh and lovers of dharma. Just as they act in such circumstances you must also act. And now in the matter of those who are falsely accused (of some crime) you should follow the Brahmanas who are on the spot, who are able to judge carefully, who are experienced, independent, not harsh and lovers of dharma. Just as they act towards them (the accused) you must also act towards them. This is the Vedic injunction. This is the instruction. This is the upanishad (secret) of the Vedas. Thus must one guide one's life. This is the only way of guiding one's life.

May Mitra be propitious to us. May Varuna be propitious to us. May Aryman be propitious to us. May Indra and Brihaspati be propitious to us. I bow down before Brahman. O Vayu, I bow down before Thee. Thou alone art the manifest Brahman. I have proclaimed Thee the manifest Brahman. I have proclaimed Thee the law. I have proclaimed thee the Truth. That has protected me. That has protected the Guru. That has protected me. That has protected the Guru.

Om Peace ! Peace ! Peace !



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Translated by

Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Sri Bhagavan said :

Again I shall declare to you, the Supreme, highest and best wisdom, realizing which all the sages have attained hence the highest perfection.

2

Having attained this wisdom those who became one with Me, are not born at the time of creation nor are they afflicted at the time of dissolution.

7

3

The great Prakriti is My womb. Into that I cast My seed. Thence are all creatures born, O Bharata.

4

Of all the forms that are born from whatever wombs, Prakriti is the great Womb — (The Mother) and I am the Father, who cast the seed, O Son of Kunti.

5

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the qualities that are born from Prakriti. They bind the

imperishable spirit to the body, O Mighty-armed One.

6

Of these, Sattva, on account of its purity, is illuminating and flawless. It binds (the embodied spirit) through attachment to happiness and knowledge, O sinless one.

7

Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion, born of desire and attachment. It binds, O son of Kunti, the embodied spirit by attachment to action (and its fruit).

8

Know that Tamas, which deludes all beings, is born of ignorance; it binds (the embodied beings) by error, sloth, sleep and the like), O Bharata.

9

Sattva leads (a man) to happiness, O Bharata; Rajas to action; while Tamas, veiling wisdom, urges (him) to error.

10

Sattva prevails overcoming Rajas and Tamas, O Bharata; and Rajas prevails overpowering Sattva and Tamas, and Tamas prevails suppressing Sattva and Rajas.

11

When in the body with all its gates (viz., the senses) there springs forth light and wisdom, one should know that Sattva has prevailed.

12

Greed, activity, undertaking of actions (with a selfish motive), restlessness and desire are born when Rajas prevails, O Best of the Bharata.

13

When Tamas predominates darkness, inactivity, error and illusion come forth, O delighter of the Kurus.

14

When a person is dissolved (i.e. dies) with Sattva predominating, he reaches the pure worlds of the highest wisdom.

15

When he is dissolved with Rajas overpowering, he is born among those attached

to action; dissolved when Tamas predominating, he is born in the wombs of the ignorant (i.e. animals, birds, etc.)

16

They say that the fruit of Sattvic action is Sattvic and pure. The fruit of the Rajasic action, however, is sorrow: Ignorance is the result of tamasic action.

17

Wisdom springs from Sattva; greed, indeed, from Rajas, and from Tamas arise error, delusion and ignorance.

18

Those who abide in Sattva go higher (i.e. to the higher world): those of Rajasic nature stay in the middle (world); those of Tamasic nature, in the lowest quality, go to the lowest.

19

When the seer clearly sees that there is no agent (or doer) apart from the qualities and knows (Me) beyond the qualities, he attains to My Being. (This is known as 'Viveka'—which leads to wisdom).

20

An embodied being, having transcended these three qualities arising from the body, becomes free from birth, death, old age and sorrow and attains Immortality.

(One has to transcend the Sattva also, as it creates egoism of a subtle nature and binds the person).

21

Arjuna said:

What are the marks of One who has transcended these three qualities, O Lord? How does he behave? And how does he transcend them?

22

Sri Bhagavan replied:

When Light, activity and delusion (or ignorance) come, O son of Pandu, he is not averse to them, nor does he desire them, when they do not come.

23

Like an aloof witness, he is not disturbed by the gunas (qualities); he stays firm, does not waver, considering that action proceeds from the gunas.

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24

He is the same in pain and pleasure, self-poised, of equal value are to him clod of earth, stone and gold; the pleasant and unpleasant, censure or praise he regards alike.

25

The same in honour and dishonour towards friends and foes; he who abandons the initiative in all undertakings — is called one beyond qualities.

26

And he who serves Me with love and undeviating devotion, completely transcends the qualities and merges in Brahman.

27

For, I am the abode of Brahman, that is immortal, and imperishable, of Dharma that is perennial, and utter bliss.

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter entitled: "*The Yoga of Division of the Three Qualities*".

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

71. The world's ways do not touch the sun.
The properties of earth, water, fire
and air
Do not touch the ether,
Even so, our doings, it is certain,
Do not affect the Lord
Untouched by mind.

72. Inward in the Heart inquiring
"Who am I?" the seeker vanishes
And only Siva shines.
The avid beholder having disappeared.
'Tis madness to contend
The world-appearance has reality.

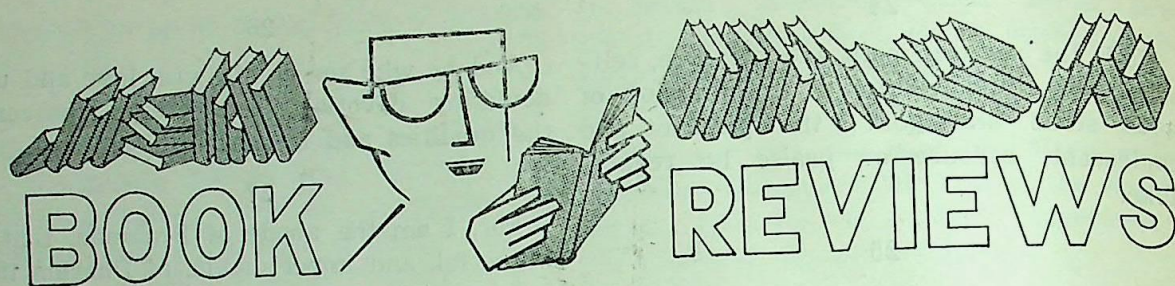
73. When in this wise both I and world
are gone
Siva's bright awareness shines alone.
This flawless Truth of One without
a second,
By whom or how can It be known
or reckoned?



74. If world or I were real like the Lord
His wholeness would be flawed.
Unless we grant the Lord could be
divided
Nought else can claim reality.

75. While thus Reality is One,
All schools concede at first
Three prime entities,¹
For otherwise the mind discursive
Would not begin the quest at all.

¹ God, soul and world.



✓ **REALISATION OF ONENESS:** The Practice of Spiritual Healing By Joel Goldsmith. Ed. by Lorraine Sinkler. George Allen & Unwin Pp. 209. Price: 25sh. in U.K.

Joel Goldsmith is too well known as a writer on spiritual healing to need introduction.

Realization of Oneness is another book on the practice of spiritual healing in the spirit of advaita from the Christian point of view, with its emphasis also on devotion, on consecration to our neighbours' needs, in giving and serving which purifies the mind. At the same time Joel Goldsmith expresses purely advaitic concepts: God and man are one. The nature of man, then, is the nature of God expressed individually. "I and my Father are one". His eternal life is the life of our being. If we know our true nature we know the nature of God, the perfect Self. This brings one to Sri Ramana Maharshi's *vichara*, the Self-Enquiry "Who am I?"

If the cause of the prevailing chaos is to be removed, the world must awaken spiritually to the understanding of the real nature of God, the Self. This view is shared by many outstanding philosophers of our time such as Prof. S. Radhakrishnan in one of his latest books "Religion in a Changing World".

The secret of the Infinite Way is revealed in the realization of God's nature which is pure Consciousness and also the consciousness of every man in its limited aspect. Meditation reveals by degrees our true state and leads ultimately to enlightenment.

Spiritual healing has its foundation in God who is forever harmonious being. All human ills are a sort of hypnotism brought about by the hypnotism that we are separate beings from God. Healing comes through practising the Presence of God through a realization of "the principles of impersonalization and nothingization". All the evils of this world are nothing but pictures in the mind and when we know this they begin to dissolve.

This book is a condensed form of the essence of the Infinite Way practice with what seem unavoidable condensed repetitions. Its unique healing principles have proved extraordinarily successful by all accounts.

LUCIA OSBORNE.

✓ **THE PATH OF FREEDOM** (Vimuttimagga): By Arhant Upatissa; Translated from the Chinese by the Rev. N. R. M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera. Available from Dr. D. Roland D. Weerasuria, Balcombe House, Balcombe Place, Colombo-8. Pp. 362. Price: Rs. 8.00.

The Path of Freedom — Vimuttimagga — in its original Pali text by Upatissa, has not survived the vicissitudes of time and the translation into English has been made from a 6th Century Chinese translation by Soma Thera. After his death it was gone through, completed and made ready for publication by Kheminda Thera as a work of love.

Soma Thera came from a catholic background and his unanswered questions or rather the quest for truth led him to the Buddhadhamma. He became such an outstanding scholar and monk that he was held in highest regard by those who knew him for his qualities of mind and heart and was mentioned to the Faculty of Eastern Religions at Oxford as eminently qualified by way of knowledge to fill the vacant chair of Eastern Religions. He was an indefatigable worker with many translations and outstanding works on Buddhist lore to his credit. He finished the translation of the present very elaborate work in hardly four months in spite of ill-health and died shortly afterwards of overwork.

Vimuttimagga is a work of great merit. Its author was called 'Great Light'. It has inspired men of ancient and present times by his practical approach and instruction in the path of freedom. It is less concerned with the exegesis and scholarly expositions of the Buddhist teaching as in the Visuddhimagga which is more academic.

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Both cover more or less the same ground. The *Vimuttimaggā* gives the impression of being written from the heart with great urgency (according to the translator).

It describes the path of freedom, training, removal of impurities, characteristics and benefits of virtue, impediments and, what is of help, mindfulness of respiration, concentration, super-normal powers caused by mind and various miscellaneous teachings with similes.

These expositions are very elaborate and at the same time cryptic.

Those who are interested in following this path will be greatly inspired by this translation which is appearing in English for the first time.

SHAKINAH.

✓
HINDUISM THROUGH THE AGES: By Prof. D. S. Sarma, 3rd edition, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 300. Price: Rs. 2.50.

Devotees and admirers of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi were no doubt disappointed at the scant treatment which was meted out to him by Professor Sarma in the first two editions of his excellent book on the progress of Hinduism through the ages. This defect has now been rectified in the present edition by the insertion of an entire chapter on the Maharshi. This chapter, though brief, contains the essentials of the Maharshi's teachings. Of particular interest is the question put by the author to the Maharshi and his spirited reply in regard to the sadhana followed by him before his enlightenment. Of equal interest is the statement that for eleven centuries after Shankara no great teacher had laid such emphasis on the path of knowledge as the Maharshi. The references given in the footnotes to this chapter do not indicate the editions of the books referred to and seem to be incorrect in some cases.

The remaining chapters of the book are only reproductions of those found in the earlier editions. They are of great value for those who are interested in making a critical and historical study of Hinduism, especially its features like bhakti and tantrism which are now so predominant among the masses. The major part of the book is devoted to the present Hindu renaissance and the important part played in it by institutions and individuals like the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramana Maharshi and Dr. Radhakrishnan. One cannot

think of a better guide book to the religious and spiritual movements of the last two hundred years in India. The book is written throughout in a simple and attractive style. There is no index but there are several detailed tabular statements in an appendix which show the various periods and movements and their distinguishing features.

M. C. SUBRAMANIAN.

SIXTY YEARS OF BUDDHISM IN ENGLAND:

By Christmas Humphreys, Buddhist Society, London. Pp. 84. Price: 18 sh.

This souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee of Buddhism in England is an interesting record of the first sixty years of the English Buddhist Society. It begins with the story of the first Society (1907-1926), goes on to the story of the present Society, and ends with a survey of Buddhism today.

From the start, the Society was faced with two problems: first, how to satisfy those who wished to study Buddhism objectively and whose main interest was its religious literature; second, how to help those who wanted to practise Buddhism as a way of life. Much was done to cater for these needs by more and more translations of the scriptures of the various schools, and by the books and visits of Dr. Suzuki from 1927 onwards. It is perhaps difficult for us today to imagine the impact which the newly introduced Mahayana School made in the West. For the first time in history, Western man was made aware of the wide range of Buddhist metaphysics, and in Zen particularly he found a practice with a strong appeal.

The attempts to introduce Buddhism into England at the turn of the century make a story of courage and tenacity in the face of obstacles both within and without. From that pioneer work the present Society has grown, and coped with its own difficulties and dangers. Throughout, it has received much help and encouragement from Eastern Buddhists. Visits have been exchanged which have further helped to strengthen ties.

In the present survey the author raises some of the many problems facing Buddhists today. How can the many-sided challenge which a fast-changing world presents be met creatively but without compromising principle? With that question posed, the author leaves his readers confronting the future.

No one is better fitted to record the achievements of the first sixty years of the English

Society than Christmas Humphreys, its Founding President since 1926, and to whose guidance and inspiration it owes so much.

MARTHA VAUGHAN

RAMANA MANJARI — an illustrated Souvenir produced in aid of the Building Fund of Ramana Kendra, Delhi. Price Rs. 3 (Copies can be had from Sri Ramanasramam).

This Souvenir containing authoritative articles, extracts and pictures has turned out to be a brief but beautiful anthology of Ramana literature, put together by a committee consisting of

Dr. K. M. Munshi, Prof. K. Swaminathan and others. Among the contributors are Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Morarji Desai, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Mr. Arthur Osborne, Justice M. Ananthanarayanan, Prof. D. S. Sarma, Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. The fresh translation of Bhagavan's *Upadesa Sara* has a clarity and directness of appeal which adds to the value of the collection. As the contents are precious and the cause is worthy, the *Manjari* will, it is hoped, find wide support among devotees and others interested in the spread of the philosophy of Sri Bhagavan.

'SEIN'

The Infinite

As rivers flow into the sea and in doing so lose name and form, even so the wise man, freed from name and form, attains the Supreme Being, the Self-luminous, the infinite.

— *Mundaka Upanishad.*

Published for the first time!

SRI BHAGAVAT VACHANAMRTAM (THIRUVARUNMOZHI)

(TAMIL)

VOLUME I

A true translation from English to Tamil, of the famous **TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI**. Sri R. Viswanathan, a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan and an erudite scholar, has successfully brought out the spirit of the original into the translated version of that great treatise.

Every Tamil-knowing devotee should possess a copy of this precious volume. (Volumes II and III will be published soon).

Pages: 300

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1968



..... to the EDITOR

CONCENTRATION

I received two of the journals for the months of January and April 1968 and I can say with confidence that they are very interesting as well as illuminating for the peace of mind and perfect realization. I must write and say a few words that the *Mountain Path* is very lucky to have a well read, painstaking and highly religious and advanced soul like you, as an Editor of the journal.

It will be a personal favour to me, if you can help and guide me to solve my difficulty as I cannot concentrate and meditate for awakening those higher states of consciousness due to the fleeting thoughts and emotions which from time to time float through my mind. I am a staunch follower of Zoroastrian religion and say my daily prayers very regularly since my childhood with all my heart and soul as my humble thanksgiving to the Almighty God. Being a novice I would most sincerely and earnestly request you to make me understand and teach the most difficult art of concentration and meditation by sending me printed or typed lectures, literatures or pamphlets on this subject. I would most willingly buy those old journals of *Mountain Path* containing articles on the above-mentioned subject. Your suggestion for a particular book or books will be highly appreciated.

DR. K. S. CHOKSI,
Bhavanagar.

It is a good thing to practise one's religion regularly and from the heart. During sadhana fleeting thoughts and emotions float through the mind and rise to the surface so that what is hidden can be dealt with either through the *vichara* asking yourself "To whom is this thought or emotion?" which leads to the question "Who am I?" or simply by not paying attention to such thoughts and emotions. They will cease to

cloud your mind in due course of their own accord. One can also watch the in-going and out-going breaths without any counting or pranayama, simply passively watch them till they become calm and even. All sadhana aims at stilling the mind.

EDITOR.

ART AS SADHANA?

I shall be happy if you can answer my questions.

(1) In some books I have read that the arts like drawing, sculpture, painting are a sadhana (with some appropriate rules). But I have never found a great master (except for Plotinus, cf. John Spiers's article "The artist as sadhaka" in the *Mountain Path* of January 1965) or a serious spiritual tradition which teaches this. Is Sri Maharshi known to have stated anything about this sort of sadhana? If you know some great teacher or a spiritual tradition which teaches these special arts as a sadhana can you give me some indications about them?

(2) In your book 'Ramana Maharshi', chapter XIV, p. 178 (introduction) I have noticed that it speaks of 'end of ages'. What do you mean by this?

(3) About 'Ahimsa': It is the duty (dharma) of the sannyasin and Sri Maharshi taught this to devotees who lived with Him. But Sri Maharshi said also that 'Self-Enquiry' and 'bhakti-marga' must be followed in active life. The Grihastha (householder) has the duty to fight and kill, if necessary, the people who menace the religion, the nation, the family or him. So what is to be done if he follows the path of Self-Enquiry taught by the Maharshi? Must he resist or not? What is his duty?

ANONYMOUS, Paris.

(1) Sri Ramana Maharshi has never spoken about art as sadhana. If action whether art or anything else is performed selflessly to the best of our ability without caring for the fruit or result (nishkama karma) it becomes sadhana and serves to purify the mind.

(2) At the end of a yuga or a cycle of civilization comes dissolution (pralaya) followed again by a new cycle and golden age.

(3) Everyone should follow his own dharma or duty. The dharma of a sanyasin is not to resist evil while that of a householder is to protect those dependant on him. Following the path of Self-enquiry does not stand in the way of performing what is of right one's duty, which naturally varies with the performer.

EDITOR.

MEDITATION ON HEART

It appears that Bhagavan Ramana had advised an aspirant to meditate on the 'heart' which is the coolest place since the sadhaka was getting headaches.

It is not clear to me if one can meditate without using the head or the thinking power at all. In that case the headache is bound to occur when one starts focusing the mind or as you had formerly remarked that meditation is more a feeling than concentrating on any place inside the body or even outside. Such cryptic advice needs elaborate explanation for weak minds to grasp exactly the practical technique. As you so wonderfully explain in the Reader's columns I should be happy to know a detailed practical

foolproof method of such a type of cool meditation which does not result in any headache or other kinds of physical disturbance.

My own experience shows that the whole physical structure undergoes a transformation as the body gets charged with vibrations. I hope you will make this clear for novices of my type.

Finally as Goudapada is said to have stated to his disciple when he complained of headache 'why boy, there is no head, where is your headache?'

S. ALWAR,
Bombay.

If meditation causes headaches the best thing is to concentrate on the heart, not the physical organ but the spiritual heart at the right side of the chest. With practice one can hear even the heartbeats there. One can and should meditate without actively thinking. Thoughts will come to cloud the mind. Just watch them passively without paying much attention to them. They will vanish in due course of their own accord. You can also watch your breathing without thinking of anything, or counting; just be a witness of your breathing and it will become calm and even and help the headaches also.

The more one meditates without straining the more one experiences a feeling of lightness of the body. I presume you mean that when writing about the vibrations and transformation of the body.

Gaudapada meant by his remark that the body itself is an illusion or superimposition.

EDITOR.

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Just Published!!

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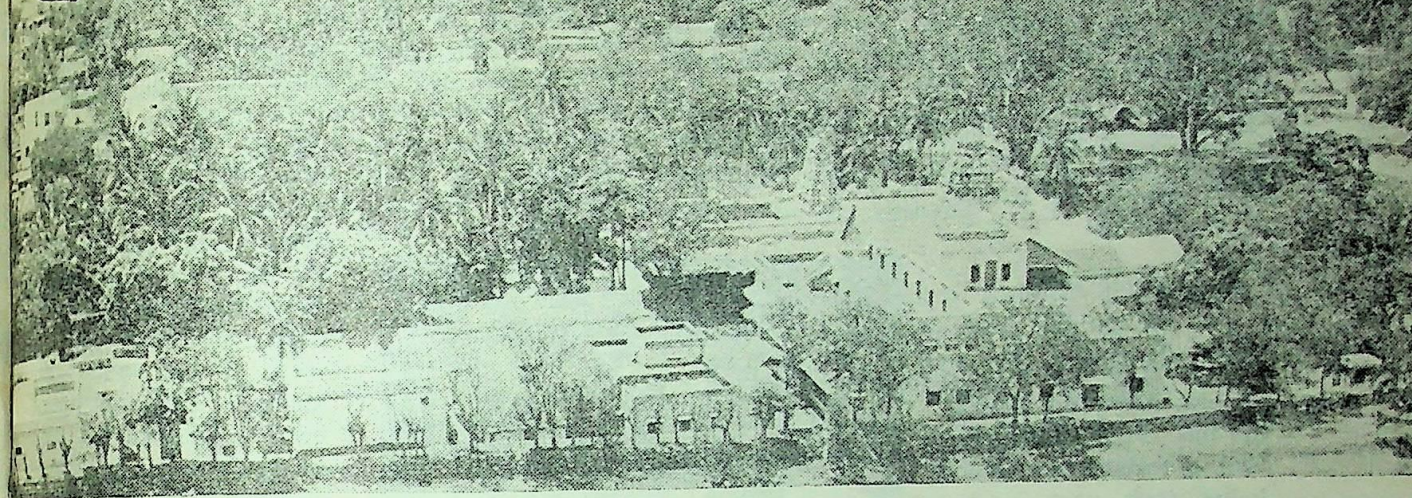
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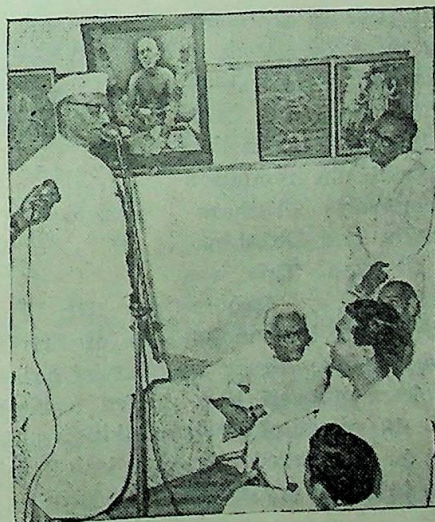
A HAPPY FUNCTION AT THE CAPITAL

AT A special function held on Saturday, the 14th September, 1968, at Vinayak Mandir, New Delhi, Shri Morarji Desai, President of the Ramana Kendra, Delhi, released *RAMANA MANJARI*,¹ a souvenir produced in aid of the building fund of the Kendra.

presented by Shri A. R. Natarajan, to the Kendra on behalf of Sri Ramanasramam.



Shri Morarji Desai, is seen absorbed in the contents of the souvenir, *RAMANA MANJARI*, which he released on the 14th Sept. '68.



Shri Morarji Desai, Deputy Prime Minister of India, addresses the Ramana-bhaktas, Prof. K. Swaminathan, Dr. C. Ramaswamy (standing) Shri M. L. Sondhi, and others listen with rapt attention.

Shri Morarji Desai recalled his visit to Sri Bhagavan in 1935 and the unique peace and ananda he had in His presence and talked of the need for the practice of His teachings.

¹A review of the Souvenir appears in the Book Reviews column of this issue.

A striking coloured photograph of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, 30"×40" size, was formally

The function was well attended and the programme included chanting of Upanishad, *Upadesa Saram*, *Arunachala Siva* and silent meditation.

Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary of the Ramana Kendra, Delhi, presented a report on the Kendra's activities.

Dr. C. Ramaswamy thanked Shri Morarji Desai and Shri M. L. Sondhi and others for their sustained help to the Kendra.

SAINT'S DAY AT DELHI

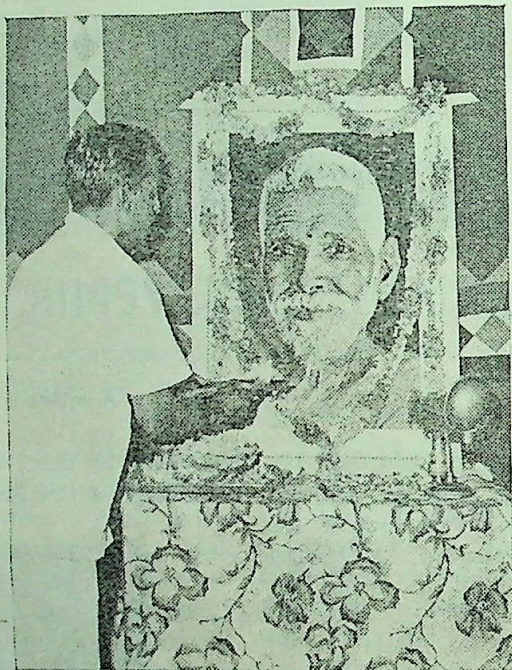
Arunagirinathar Day was celebrated on 16th August in the Vinayak Mandir Hall, Sarojini nagar. Many ladies took part in the choric singing, and the function was a great success.

ARADHANA AT SANKARA VIHAR

Sri Ramana Aradhana was observed in a solemn manner by the devotees in Sankara Vihar, Madras 23, on Thursday, the 25th April 1968. The function started with the recitation of Bhagavan's *Aksharamanamalai* and *Dakshina-murti Stotram*. This was followed by a discourse by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan on *Hastamalakiyam* of Sri Hastamalaka, one of the direct disciples of Sri Sankara. Sri Sankara himself has written a commentary on these 12 verses of *Hastamalakiyam*. Bhagavan Ramana has rendered this work into Tamil verses with an introductory verse of his own.

After explaining briefly in English the import of the original work for the benefit of some members of the audience who were not conversant with Tamil, Dr. Mahadevan elucidated the poem of Bhagavan in Tamil, bringing out the essence of Advaita philosophy, viz., 'I am the ever-luminous Reality', *nityopalabधि-svarupoham atma*, the refrain with which every verse in the *Hastamalakiyam* ends.

After puja and pushpanjali the function came to a close.



Arathi (waving of light) is being performed to the beautiful portrait of Sri Bhagavan, presented to the Kendra by the Ashram.

SRI RAMANA SAT SANGH

The Sat Sanghs continue to be held and are attended by the inmates and non-resident devotees regularly. They are now held on four days. On Sundays and Thursdays Sri Sadhu Om reads and explains a few verses from Sri Bhagavan's *Nool Thirattu* (*The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*) in Tamil from the beginning. On Tuesdays and Saturdays Suri Nagamma reads some of the letters which she wrote from Sri Ramanasramam during Sri Bhagavan's time. Although these letters (the well-known, *Lekhalu*) have been published in the original Telugu, only some of them have been translated into English and printed till now. She now reads, for the benefit of those who cannot read Telugu (those letters which have not yet been published in English translation¹) and explains them in Tamil. Being narratives of an eyewitness they are of absorbing interest to all devotees of Sri Bhagavan who feel as if they are actually in His presence and seeing Him and hearing Him talk.

EDITOR'S VISIT TO UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. Arthur Osborne, our Editor, along with Mrs. Osborne, has gone to England for two or three months, after a lapse of over twenty-five years, to meet his old mother and daughters and also for change to recoup his rather indifferent health. Before proceeding to England they spent a few days in Madrid, Spain, with our friend and Sri Bhagavan's devotee, Mrs. Regina Sendras.

Mrs. Osborne writes from London: "In Madrid there was a gathering of Spanish devotees of Sri Bhagavan to meet A. O. and thank him for the work of spreading Sri Bhagavan's teachings. The Spanish translation of *Ramana*

¹ The Second volume of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* is expected to be printed in 1969 along with the first volume, now out of stock, perhaps as a combined volume.

1968

Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge is so popular that it is already exhausted and it has to be reprinted. A.O.'s family is very happy to see him again. He feels better in this climate but misses very much Tiruvannamalai."

VISITORS AND PILGRIMS

Of the numerous aspirants who visited the Ashram in the first half of the year all have left with the exception of *Horst Rutkowski* from West Germany who continues to practise his sadhana in a most inconspicuous manner. There were a number of visitors, as usual, from foreign countries¹ but with the exception of one or two they stayed only for very short periods.

Dr. Karl Pfauter, Consul General for West Germany in Madras, paid a visit to the Ashram in August. He has long been interested in Sri Bhagavan's teachings and showed much interest in seeing the places associated with Him.

*Sri D. S. Sastri*² an old and well-known devotee, came with his family to celebrate his seventy-first birthday at the Ashram. Special pujas were conducted on the occasion.

Mrs. Barbara Rose, hailing from U.S.A., was in Madras in 1961 and stayed for more than a year. Although she was so near to the Ashram she did not hear anything about Sri Bhagavan. It was when she was teaching Yoga in Holland later on that she heard of Him. She immediately felt that He was her Guru. She was trying to come to India ever since but could do so only recently. She and her husband were posted to Kathmandu for some work connected with Peace Corps. She then availed herself of

the ten days of leave to fly south and visit the important places connected with Sri Bhagavan in Tiruvannamalai. She spent most of her time in contemplation. She said: "His teachings! Each time you go back to it, it says more to you and some other idea comes suddenly alive. There's so much in it and it helps to keep things in neat order in the mind, ready to be taken out and used when needed." She wants to come again with her husband.

Mr. Roger Henninger, from France, visited the Ashram a few months back but stayed only for a couple of days. However, he strongly felt the presence of Sri Bhagavan and His guidance. He has come again with the object of spending four months at the Ashram.

Sri K. S. Varadan (Asst. Dy. Director General of Drugs, Calcutta), who is a staunch theosophist and devotee of Sri Bhagavan, fulfilled his long cherished wish to visit the abode of Sri Bhagavan, in August, by bringing his family to spend a couple of days at the Ashram. The Old Hall attracted him most and he spent quiet hours there meditating. His wife and son were also very much impressed by the serene spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram. Sri Varadan is an enthusiastic supporter of *The Mountain Path* and helps the journal in all possible ways. This visit of his to the Ashram has impressed him so much that he now avows to be back here at no longer distance. We extend to him, as always, a warm welcome!

TRUSTEES' VISIT TO TIRUCHUZH

The President, *Sri T. N. Venkataraman* and the Trustees, *Sri B. S. Ranganadham* and *Sri K. Padmanabhan*, visited Tiruchuzhi and Madurai between the 11th and 14th August. They were accompanied and ably assisted by *Sri R. Srirama Iyer*. They inspected the Ashram lands in Chennilakudi village, near Tiruchuzhi, which were inherited from Sri Bhagavan's ancestors, with a view to examine the possibilities of reclaiming some of the area for wet cultivation.

The *Sundara Mandiram*, at Tiruchuzhi, the birthplace of Sri Maharshi, and the *Ramana Mandiram* at Madurai, where Bhagavan had his first death experience (both these places are regarded as pilgrim centres by Ramana-bhaktas) were also inspected and proposals for certain improvements were formulated.

¹ Jean Deloche — France
 Jeannine Deloche — France
 Francis Deloche — France
 Christopher Richard Pegler — U.K.
 Gregory W. Hkamper — U.S.A.
 Tima Newman — U.S.A.
 Ritama Willem Evero — Netherlands
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 Bogenachneider — Germany
 Antonie Kaitenheim — Germany
 George Hobart — U.S.A.
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 Gerald Davis — U.S.A.

² His article on *How he came to the Maharshi* was published on page 55 of January, 1967 issue.

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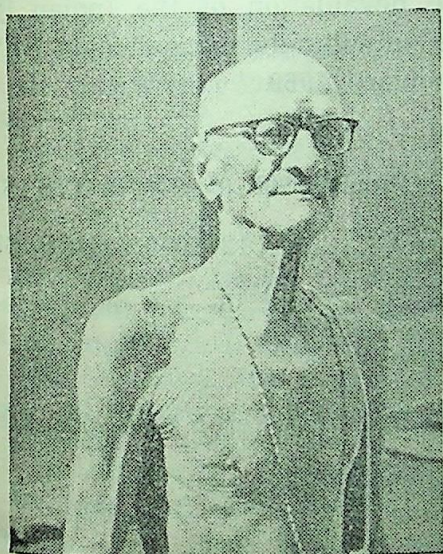
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NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (commences on)	..	Monday	23- 9-1968
SARASWATHI POOJA	..	Monday	30- 9-1968
VIJAYADASAMI	..	Tuesday	1-10-1968
DEEPAVALI	..	Monday	21-10-1968
SKANDASHASHTI	..	Sunday	27-10-1968
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)	..	Sunday	24-11-1968
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	..	Tuesday	3-12-1968
JAYANTHI OF SRI MAHARSHI (89th Birthday)	..	Saturday	4- 1-1969
PONGAL	..	Tuesday	14- 1-1969
CHINNASWAMI ARADHANA	..	Sunday	2- 2-1969
MAHA SIVARATHRI	..	Saturday	15- 2-1969
TELUGU NEW YEAR DAY	..	Wednesday	19- 3-1969
SRI VIDYA HAVAN	..	Friday	21- 3-1969
TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY	..	Sunday	13- 4-1969
ARADHANA OF SRI MAHARSHI (19th Anniversary)	..	Monday	14- 4-1969

INTRODUCING.....

SRI RAMANAPĀDĀNANDA

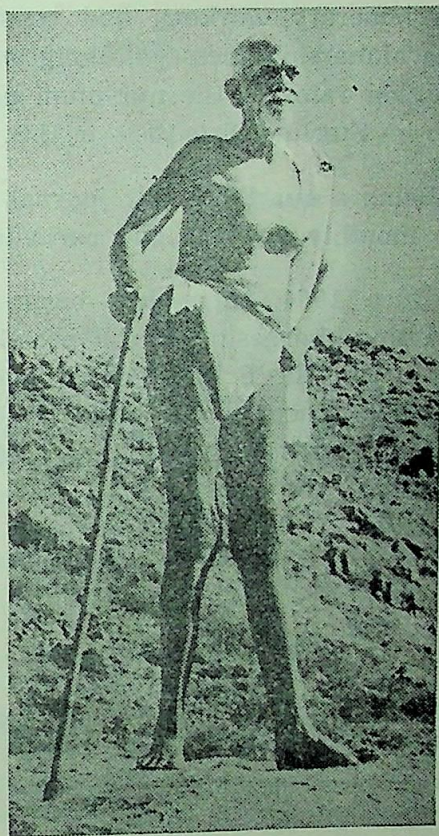
IN his *purvasrama*, Sri Ramanapadananda was V. S. Kuppaswami Ayyangar. Born in 1889, he had made and lost several fortunes in business and had travelled widely all over India before he met Sri Bhagavan and Seshadriswami in January 1928 and felt drawn to spiritual life. It was two years later, in February 1930, that B. V. Narasimha Swami and others, observing the Sri Vaishnava's delighted contemplation of the Guru's feet, conferred on him his present and highly cherished name of Ramanapadananda.



Sri Ramanapadananda

Not long after, his devotion to Bhagavan took concrete shape as steady service to the poet Muruganar, whose inspired and scholarly utterances he has not only brought out in a long series of perfectly produced volumes, but has further popularized through repeated propaganda tours of Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia and various parts of India. Wherever he found the response encouraging, as for example in Nagarathar centres, Sri Padananda organized the systematic and continuous recital of Muruganar's *magnum opus*, the *Ramana Sannidhi Murai*.

A phenomenon as remarkable as it is praiseworthy is the total absence of misprint, wrong



spacing or broken type in any one of the many volumes of Tamil poetry brought out by this ardent admirer. This absolute flawlessness was the result of the publisher's close co-operation with Muruganar himself and of his success in enlisting the help of scholars like V. S. Chengalvaraya Pillai and K. V. Jagannathan in the formidable task of taking these complex compositions through the press. No wonder Muruganar makes a specific reference by name to this admirer in stanza 5 of *Ramana Vaibhavam*, one of the poet's most highly elaborated songs.

From 1964 onwards, Sri Padananda, his mightily efforts and wide wanderings over, has settled down in Ramanasramam, where he finds and spreads joy by joining in the daily *parayana* of Tamil poems.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS both Indian and Overseas

Our quarterly journal was inaugurated in 1964 with the willing co-operation of several honorary workers, and considering that its aim is to disseminate Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's message, along with other genuine spiritual teachings, we fixed the subscription rates at the minimum possible, viz., (original rate) Indian — Rs. 5.00; Foreign — Sterling £ 0-10-0 or U.S. \$ 1.50.

Being a quarterly, our journal cannot claim the special postal concessions available to monthly journals and periodicals issued at more frequent intervals.

Since 1964, there has been a steady rise in the cost of paper, materials and printing charges; and the postal charges have been steeply increased twice. The devaluation of the British Pound, soon following the devaluation of the Indian Rupee has further added to our costs. We are, therefore, unwillingly compelled to REVISE the subscription rates, as follows: effective from January 1969 for renewals and new enrolments:

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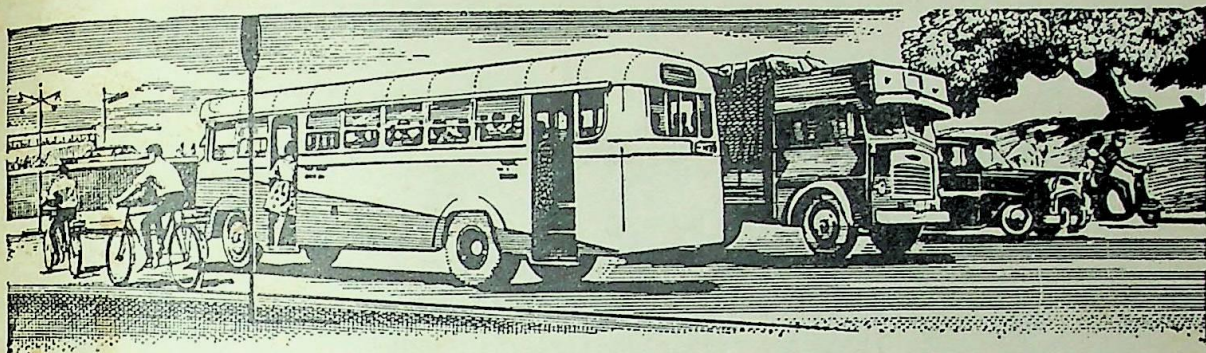
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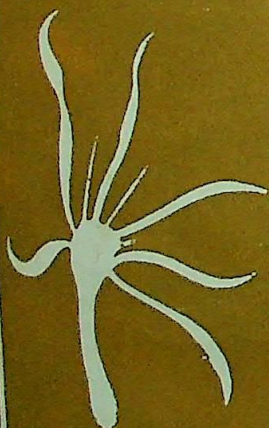


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